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Seventeen
Suffolk Martyrs
from
Dedham
Dovercourt
East Bergholt
Grundisburgh
Hadleigh
Ipswich
Woodbridge

by N. F. Layard.



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Seventeen Suffolk Martyrs,

BY

NINA FRANCES LAYARD,

With Preface by

THE REV. CANON GARRATT.

With Illustrations.

Ipswich :

SMITHS, SUITALL PRESS.

—
1902.

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LOAN STACK

"THE NOBLE ARMY OF MARTYRS: PRAISE THEE."

BX 4655
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PREFACE.

NEGLECT of the lessons of Ecclesiastical History is characteristic of the age in which we live. Never was the history itself so much studied, never were its lessons so little used as a guide for the present.

Historical facts there are which it is thought convenient to ignore. For it is another characteristic of the day to find excuses for all the past however deserving of blame. As a necessary result of this condoning of evil is the oblivion which has fallen on sufferers for righteousness' sake. Who thinks now of the great army of martyrs, who, in our own land, have in time past laid down their lives for the truth? The oppressors are lauded, the oppressed are forgotten if not blamed. The persecutors are thought well of, the men and women whom they have trampled under foot and killed are forgotten. The following pages shew that, hidden from the eyes of the English nation, there are records of holy martyrs and confessors, suspected of what they called heresy, sometimes tracked out by spies, hunted, condemned, treated as the offscouring of all things by the body which laid claim to the title of the Catholic Church.

This body still exists and makes the same claim. It has never disavowed its action or condemned the men who in its name committed these atrocities. And yet there are those who are straining every nerve to bring this nation into subjection to it again. For this purpose they attempt to put out of sight the truth of history, and hide iniquities in which the Church of Rome still glories. These suffering men and women were members of that Holy Catholic Church of which Christ is the Head, and which will only become visible when its Head appears. What calls itself the Church, and is in reality the Apostasy foretold by St. Paul, condemned them to death if they would not commit the idolatry of worshipping as God the consecrated Host. There are other things for which they also suffered martyrdom, but these saints of God, in East Anglia at all events, were enrolled in the noble army of martyrs mainly for their resistance to the doctrine of Transubstantiation and its necessary result in the idolatry of the Mass.

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints,” and it must be most pleasing in His sight to have their deaths recorded. A day will come when the books shall be opened. In the Book of Life what a catalogue will there be of holy men and women who have died or otherwise suffered for Christ’s name sake! Their histories may now lie buried in ancient libraries, covered with the dust of centuries, but they will not, any of them, be missing from the book of God’s remembrance. And in searching them out and bringing to light these forgotten memorials of what our martyrs suffered, Miss Layard has been doing a work which must be in accordance with the mind of Him to whom in life and in death these men and women witnessed. It will be an evil day for England if she is unmindful of the

past, and ever again allows the Roman Church which, when she has the power, cannot but persecute according to her principles, to obtain ascendancy once more. In Roman Catholic days before the Reformation, martyrdoms of Lollards and others were common, but it was after Protestant truth had shone for a time brightly in our land, and the darkness had fallen again upon it, that the martyrdoms described in this book took place, when it might have seemed impossible. It is well to read of them :

“Lest we forget! Lest we forget!”

SAMUEL GARRATT.

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION.

In attempting to resuscitate these tales of Suffolk Martyrs, I shall not apologize for largely drawing upon Foxe, the historian, for the facts. This writer has been much maligned by those naturally anxious to throw discredit on his work, and it is therefore satisfactory to be able to testify by personal research in the very locality where these tragedies are said to have occurred, to the veracity of statements made by him concerning some of our local heroes. That he was at great pains to correct any mistakes which might have crept into his book, we know by the very fact that he came to Ipswich himself to enquire into two cases alleged to have been misrepresented by him. Being convinced that in the one case he had been deceived he expunged it from his work, but having proved the truth of the other account it was retained.

It would be surprising, if amongst the enormous amount of material which he accumulated, some errors had not found their way into the collection, but he did his best to sift the true from the false, and was genuinely anxious to record only reliable information. In his own words, "If a lie be, after the definition of Saint Augustine, 'whatsoever thing is pronounced with the intent to deceive another,' then I protest to you and to all the world, there is never a lie in all my book. . . . For my own part I will say, although many vices I have, yet this one I have always of nature abhorred, wittingly to deceive any man or child, so near as I could, much less the Church of God, which I, with all my heart do reverence, and with fear obey."*

As regards Ipswich, Foxe seems to have had special opportunities for receiving news. Among his personal friends in the town, was one Mr. James Smyth, a young man, who commanded his "privat affection and good will," and was withal "worthy, godly and lerned." This man he recommended to the Lord Chief Justice to be made "Schoolmaster of Ipswich."

When it is remembered that Foxe's first work was published no later than 1559, we realize that he was contemporary with many of the people of whom he wrote, and we can form some estimate of the esteem in which the Book of Monuments was held by the fact that it was ordered to be chained in the Churches side by side with the Bible. Only in 1825 were the three volumes removed from their time-honoured place in Hadleigh Church.

N.F.L.

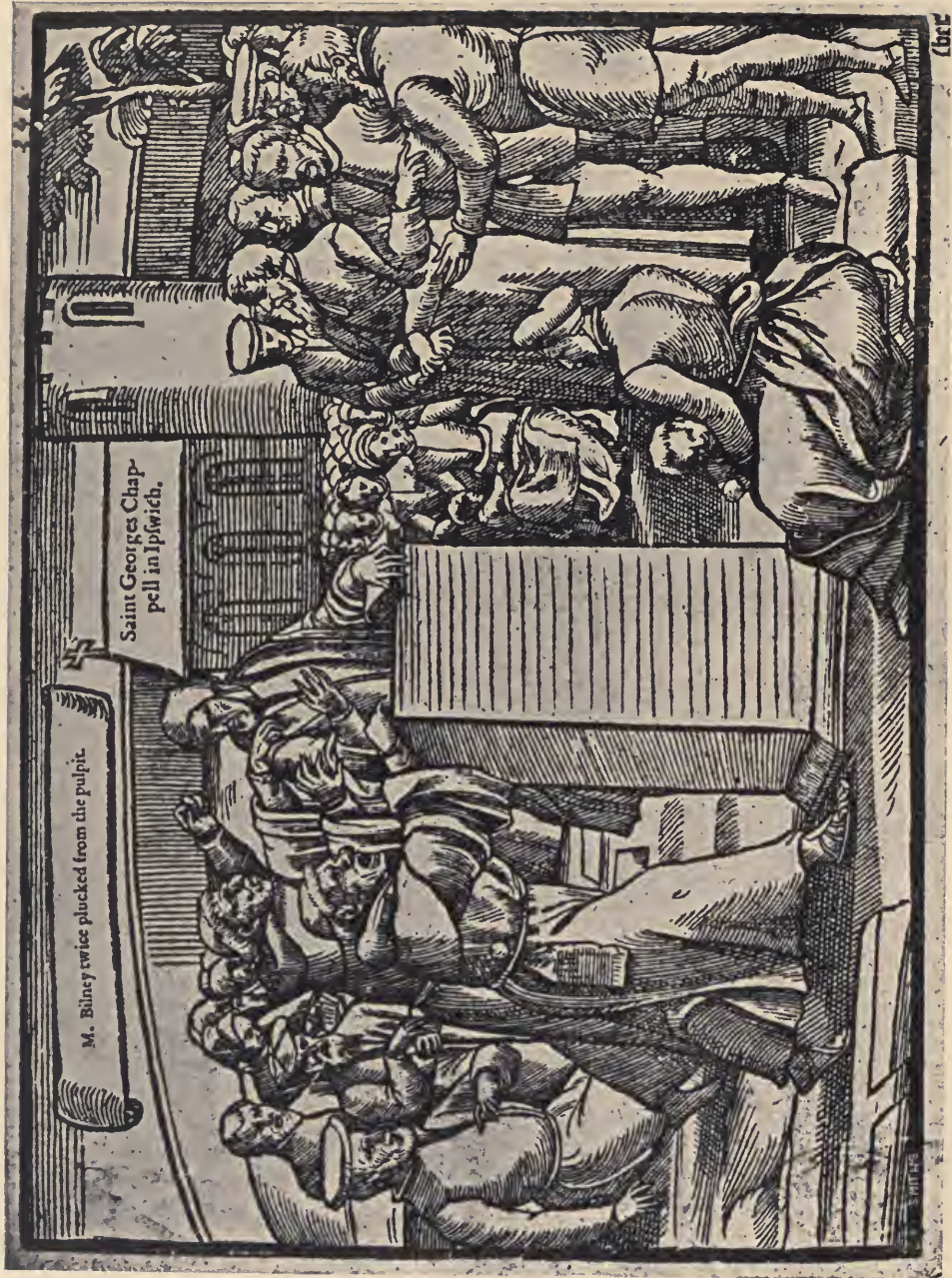
IPSWICH, 1902.

*For further notes relating to Foxe's original papers at the British Museum, see *Appendix*

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SMITHS,
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SUITALL, IPSWICH.



M. Bilney twice plucked from the pulpit.

Saint Georges Chapel in Ipswich.

From Fitch Collection, by kind permission of the Suffolk Archaeological Council.

“IT WAS IN ST. GEORGE’S CHAPEL, . . . THAT BILNEY WAS APPREHENDED AND DRAGGED FROM THE PULPIT.”—See page 4.

SAINT BILNEY.



Saint Bilney.

THERE are many sacred spots in Ipswich over which we pass unconcernedly, because unconsciously, places in which tragic scenes have been enacted, or deeds of heroism performed. If the stones could speak what tales of daring they would tell, what visions of heroes "striving unto blood" would be conjured up to arrest our careless feet, and command our reverent admiration.

Even the very churches would acquire a new and sacred interest if we could people them again with those stalwart saints of old, who bore the brunt of the battle, when to be true to conviction was inevitably to suffer.

It is not, perhaps, generally known that one of the most interesting of the martyrs connected with Ipswich preached a memorable sermon in Christchurch, which, with other daring utterances, was eventually to cost him his life.

Whether the pulpit that Thomas Bilney then occupied stood in the Priory Church of St. Trinity which was originally situated on the lawn now fronting Christchurch mansion to the east, or whether it was actually in St. Margaret's that the celebrated sermon was preached, cannot be positively stated; but as at that date, May 28th, 1527, St. Margaret's had already been standing for two hundred years or more, it is possible that it was here the fearless words were spoken. Friar John Huggen was at the service, with Friar Salles, and a certain Richard Seman, and these took notes of what passed, to be afterwards used in evidence against the preacher.

But yet another Ipswich church was to be the scene of the beginning of the final tragedy, for old records tell us that it was in St. George's Chapel, which formerly stood on the site now occupied by St. George's Terrace in George Street, that Bilney was apprehended and dragged from the pulpit as he was preaching in favour of the Reformation.

A reference to Speede's map of Ipswich, dated 1610, shows the Chapel still standing, and Ogilby's map gives the ground plan of the building. Besides these, pictures of the ruins are extant, and in early editions of Foxe's "Monuments" the little church with its round tower is represented.

It was at about the time of Bilney's conversion to Protestantism that Cardinal Wolsey awakened to the fact that a more rigorous suppression of heretics would be advantageous to his own cause, especially as the strictures openly passed on his extravagant way of living by men of spiritual mind, was likely to militate against his almost regal authority, and he at once proceeded to stringent measures.

On November 27th, 1527, Bilney, with his friend Arthur, was brought before him, charged with holding opinions contrary to the Catholic Church. But it was a serious matter to deliver over such a man to the secular power, for he was widely known for his effectual preaching, and loved by a large circle of friends, especially at Cambridge.

"Little of stature and very slender of body," the greatness of his spirit made him a power among his contemporaries. A tender, sensitive, loveable soul, he was admired alike for his fervent spirituality, and unbounded philanthropy. It was Thomas Bilney who was to be found where-ever suffering or despair had claimed their victims. Now he was tending the lepers in lazar cots, wrapping them up in sheets with his own hands, when the courage of others might have failed, speaking to them words of soothing, and leading their weary souls to take rest in comfortable pastures. Prisoners and outcasts knew him well, for to be desperate

or undone was at once to have a claim on the friendship of Bilney. Now he was stinting himself of food, and training his delicate constitution to be content with but one meal a day, because he must carry the rest to some hungry one, whose famished soul he would strive to satisfy while administering bodily relief.

But through what spiritual discipline he had himself passed, before he was thus fitted to comfort others! How he had fasted and watched, attended masses and spent his money in buying pardons, until, as he says in a letter to Tonsal, Bishop of London, "There was but small force of strength left in me (who of nature was but weak), small store of money, and very little wit or understanding."

It was just at this juncture that Erasmus made his translation of the New Testament, and Bilney, attracted merely by the scholarly work, obtained a volume. At the very first reading, as he tells Tonsal, "I chanced upon this sentence of St. Paul (O most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul), in 1 Tim. 1, '*It is a true saying and worthy of all men to be embraced, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of which I am the chief and principal,*' which did so exhilarate my heart, being wounded with the guilt of my sins, and being almost in despair, that immediately I felt a marvellous comfort and quietness, inasmuch that my bruised bones leaped for joy."

Filled with thankfulness at his new-found discovery, he must needs share it with others, and, one after another, his friends are won over till a small but zealous band of Protestants is forming at Cambridge.

But Latimer is there, waging war against the teaching of Philip Melancthon, and Bilney proceeds to catch him by guile. He goes to be confessed by him, with the result that Latimer too gives way before the fervent persuasions of "Little Bilney." And now the two, between whom a warm friendship has sprung up, are to be seen taking their daily walk together on "Heretics' Hill," as

it was afterwards called in derision, and Latimer is learning to recognize in his frail and spiritual companion the stuff that martyrs are made of. "Master Bilney," he afterwards says, "or rather, Saint Bilney, that suffered death for God's Word's sake, the same Bilney was the instrument whereby God called me to knowledge."

Among Bilney's devoted friends and converts, Thomas Arthur takes a prominent place. Together they set out to preach in Norfolk and Suffolk, and it was on this preaching tour in 1527 that "Master Lambert, a mass-priest in Norfolk," and afterwards a martyr at Smithfield, was won over to the Protestant faith, and a little later that the memorable sermons were preached in Christchurch and St. George's Chapel, Ipswich.

Finally after denouncing idolatrous practices in St. Magnus Church, London, Cardinal Wolsey caused the preacher to be apprehended, and he was taken before Tonstal, and arraigned before the Chapter House of Westminster. Every possible means, however, were used to induce Bilney to abjure, and although he remained firm for a considerable time, he at length yielded to the urgent entreaties of his friends.

There is no more pathetic figure in the whole history of martyrology than that of this saint of God, in mortal conflict with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. Even when he is worsted in the fight, and abjuring his true convictions, is compelled, as a penance for his past heresy, to bear a faggot on his shoulder, and to stand ignominiously before the whole congregation while a sermon is preached at Paul's Cross, our eyes and hearts follow him, knowing that he is sorrowing most of all because he has betrayed his Master.

After this, he must languish a whole year in the Tower to learn the lesson of obedience thoroughly, and then again we find him back at Cambridge, to enjoy his liberty once more. But, alas! it had been too dearly bought, and the next two years see him in such a state of mental agony that he can receive no comfort from his friends. In vain Latimer attempts to console him with comfort.

able words of Scripture. "It was as though a man should run him through the heart with a sword." Everything is against him. "The whole Scripture sounded to his condemnation;" and all the time his sensitive human nature shrinks with unutterable dread from the awful consequences that must surely follow if he again dares to confess his dissent from the orthodox teaching. He has borne the faggot on his shoulder, and if it had been flaming, it could not have burnt itself more deeply into his imagination. The horrible image of death is ever before him, and its significance so works upon his mind that his friends are afraid to let him be alone; and yet, says Latimer, when preaching at Lincoln "afterwards he came again; God endowed him with such strength and perfectness of faith, that he not only confessed his faith in the Gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but suffered his body to be burned for that same Gospel's sake."

So on a certain night in 1531, at ten o'clock, Bilney took leave of his friends in Trinity Hall, simply saying, "he would go up to Jerusalem, and so would see them no more." He then proceeded to Norwich, and boldly declared his convictions "till the blind Bishop Nie sent up for a writ to burn him." He was examined before Dr. Pelles, the Chancellor, and condemned, and was handed over to be dealt with by the lay power.

Of that last memorable night before his martyrdom, which was spent in the Guildhall of Norwich,* surrounded by sorrowing friends, anxious to strengthen and encourage him, a touching record remains. "With a cheerfull heart and a quiet mind," he partakes of his supper, astonishing them by the calmness of his demeanour. Then they gather round, listening in awed reverence to his Godly conversation, or striving to bridge over the coming ordeal, by putting him in mind that "though the fire which he should suffer the next day should be of great heat to his body, yet the comfort of God's Spirit should cool it to his everlasting refreshing." "At this word," we read, "the said Thomas Bilney, putting his hand towards

*The chamber in which Bilney was confined may still be seen at Norwich.

the flame of the candle burning before them (as also he did divers times besides), and feeling the heat thereof, "O," (said he), "I feel by experience, and have known it long by philosophy, that fire by God's ordinance is naturally hot, but yet I am persuaded by God's Holy Word, and by the experience of some, spoken of in the same, that in the flame they felt no heat, and in the fire they felt no consumption, and I constantly believe that, howsoever the stubble of this my body shall be wasted by it, yet my soul and spirit shall be purged thereby—a pain for the time, whereon notwithstanding followeth joy unspeakable."

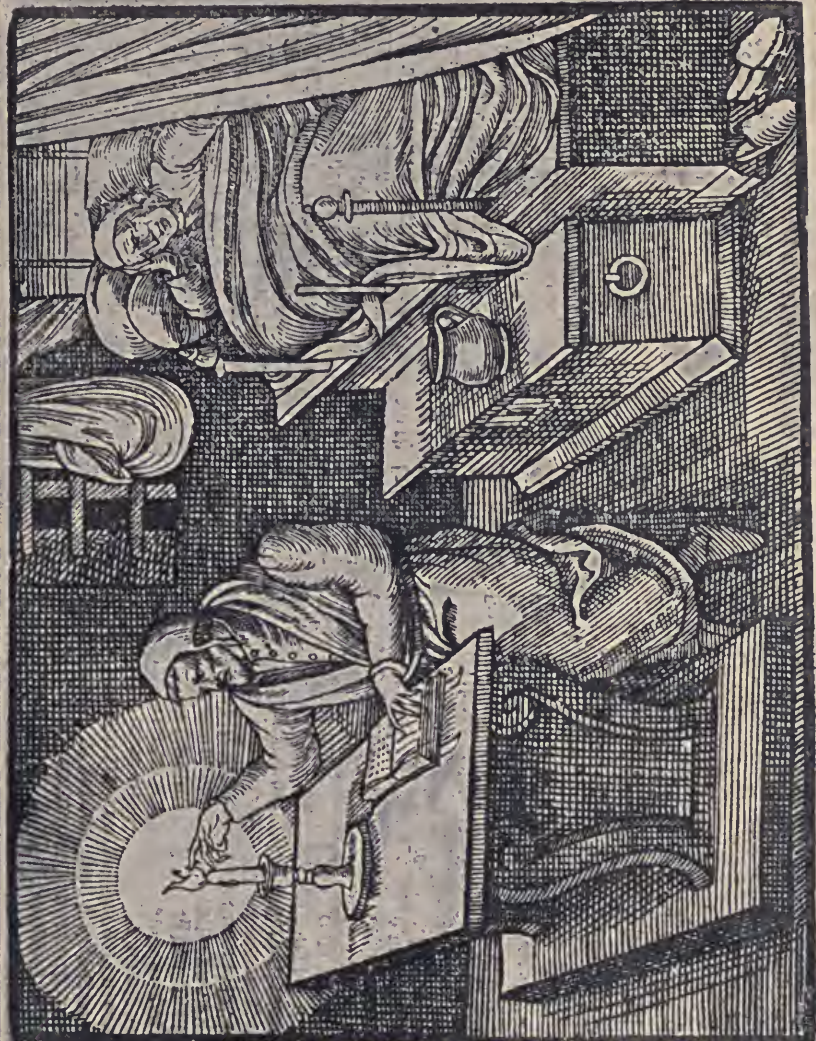
Brave words indeed, uttered as much for the sake of his sorrowing friends as to strengthen his own resolution. And yet as the night wears on, and he is left alone, with "the doctor that lay by him," it is touching to think of him again and again making that painful experiment with the candle, till at last he has dared to hold his finger so long in the flame, that the first joint is burnt, and he is thanking God for the strength given.

Then said the doctor that lay with him, "What do you, Master Bilney?" he answered, "Nothing, but trying my flesh by God's grace, and burning one joint, when to-morrow God's rods shall burn the whole body in the fire." Well done, little Bilney; to-morrow, when you stand, a pathetic, helpless figure, chained to the stake, you will have grace to smile gently on the weeping doctor who comes to bid you farewell; and when the faggots are heaped about you, and the hungry fire leaps to your face, you will bear it very bravely, only beating on your breast, and crying, "Jesus," "Credo."

But at last the pains of death are over, for then the chronicler tells us, "he gave up the Ghost, and his body being withered, bowed downward upon the chain."

So passed the blessed spirit of Thomas Bilney, saint and martyr, but the malice of his enemies pursued him to the end, and defamed him after death. To snatch the crown of martyrdom

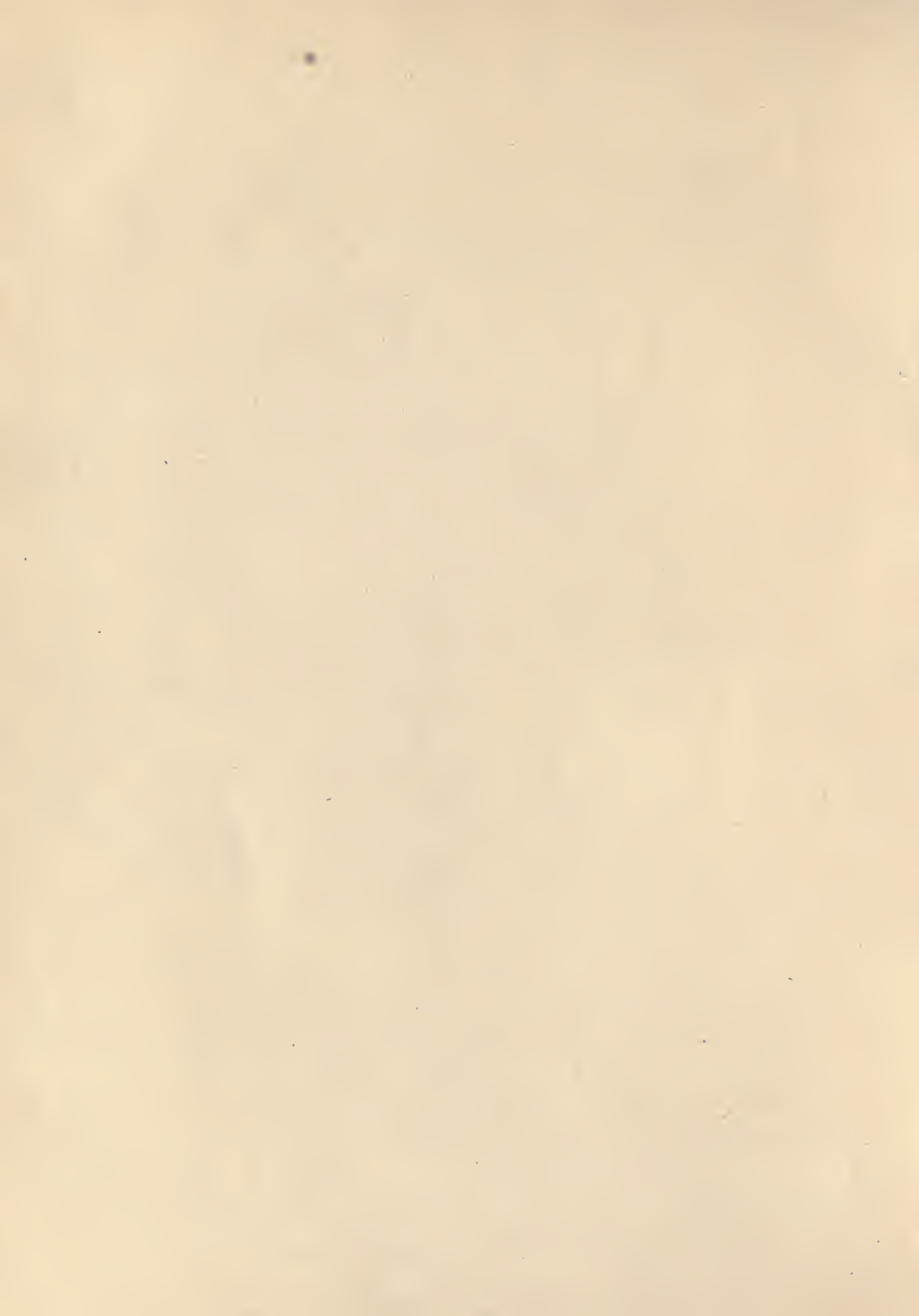
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From Fitch Collection, by kind permission of the Suffolk Archaeological Council.

“WHAT DO YOU, MASTER BILNEY?” . . . “NOTHING, BUT TRYING MY FLESH BY GOD’S GRACE, AND BURNING ONE JOINT.”



from the head of this dying saint taxed their ingenuity to the utmost; but at any price it must be done, and it was not difficult to find false witnesses to swear that before the end the trembling lips lent themselves to the reading of a bill of recantation.

But there were other witnesses present, among them Dr. Warner, whom Bilney had chosen "to be with him for his Ghostly comfort," and he knew nothing of the alleged abjuration. Had it been a fact, what excuse, indeed, could there have been for the burning of an innocent man, who had renounced his errors.

In the "Dictionary of National Biography," Professor Tout has preferred to believe the calumnies of authorities as biassed as Sir Thomas More. We would rather accept the mute but eloquent witness of that well-worn Bible of Bilney's which is still to be seen in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and read into those underlined and annotated pages the struggle of a soul that passed out of darkness into light, the soul of the man whom Latimer thus described: "I knew a man myself, Bilney, little Bilney, that blessed martyr of God . . . who took his death patiently, and died well against the tyrannical see of Rome."



THE STORY OF AGNES WARDALL.



The Story of Agnes Wardall.

To say that a man is a constable is, one would suppose, to comprehend his occupation more or less completely, for the duties of the office are sufficiently onerous to leave little time for the following up of other trades. Matthew Butler, however, the constable who was keeping watch on the Cornhill, Ipswich, in the month of July, 1556, is thus described. He was "an apothecary, a curious singing-man, a fine player of the organ, a perfect Papist, and a diligent promoter of good men." How he accomplished this last business the following true story will explain.

But first we may picture to ourselves the appearance of the Cornhill as Matthew Butler saw it that night.

To begin with, the preaching cross was still existing—not that beautiful market-cross with which we are familiar in Frost's interesting pictures, but the cross erected by Edmund Daundy in 1510, which gave place to the other after surviving for 118 years. Here it was that the Black Friars preachers held forth to the crowds who assembled for such strangely various reasons on this favourite spot. On the space now occupied by the Post Office, the "Flesh market" or "Shambles" was then to be seen. It had been standing for upwards of 200 years, and must by this time have been in a picturesque, not to say insanitary, condition of disrepair. Twenty-seven years later it was newly built.

Probably it never even crossed the constable's mind to wonder at the strange composite building, which at that time served as the Town Hall or Mote Hall, as it was then called, for he was so accustomed to its appearance. The ancient Church of St. Mildred had been desecrated to this use, and still did its best to look ecclesiastical, though divided up into stories by the insertion of floors and walls, with its interior ruthlessly re-modelled to suit new requirements. All this and much more that has long since disappeared, Butler saw, as he kept watch on the Cornhill that midsummer night. But, whatever his reveries may have been, they were suddenly disturbed by the appearance of a man approaching him in hot haste.

This was Dr. Argentine, whose zeal in searching out heretics had already made him notorious. Now he is fairly breathless with excitement, for he has trapped Agnes Wardall, of St. Clement's, who has been in hiding for conscience sake. Her husband, Robert Wardall, a man afflicted with a club foot, has also become a Protestant, and is obliged, notwithstanding his crippled condition, to hire himself out as a sailor, "yet so it pleased God to enable him with His strength, that he was strong and lusty to do good service, as they can well witness that were of his company."

Thus, the happy home in Ipswich had been rudely broken up, and Agnes was obliged to leave her two children under the care of a young servant, only occasionally venturing back under cover of night, to see how they fared.

She had ridden over from her place of retreat on this July evening, and, thinking herself undiscovered, was now peacefully at rest, her mother's heart for a while relieved of its anxiety. But the happiness would be but short-lived.

Already on the Cornhill companies of men were gathering, and being told off to various stations to watch and prevent any possibility of escape. Some were sent down to St. Clement's to surround the house of Wardall's mother, which was not far



From a copy by Hamlet Watling.

“THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF ST. MILDRED HAD BEEN DESECRATED TO THIS USE, AND STILL DID ITS BEST TO LOOK ECCLESIASTICAL.”



from his own, for this good woman was also a fugitive for the Truth's sake. Then, taking with them a number of armed men, Argentine and Butler made their way to Agnes Wardall's house. It was in the open fields, but they beset the house on all sides. Within, slumbering peacefully, aloft in an inner chamber, with her maid and the two children, the weary mother lay unconscious that her enemies were already beating at the door with their weapons.

It was a lodger, who happened to be there at the time who first heard them, and she seems to have been a woman of some spirit as well as humour. Looking out at a "day-window," which was not far from the door, she allowed them to knock three times before her tardy answer came, questioning who was there. "Ah, sirrah," quoth Argentine, "are you so nigh and will not speak? How fortun'd it that ye spake not at the first, being so nigh?"

"How fortun'd it?" quoth the woman; "marry, I shall tell you. I am but a stranger here and I have heard say that there be spirits walking here about, which, if a man do answer at the first call or second, he stands in great danger, and I was never so afraid in my life."

At this the recorder says, "They laughed, and commanded her to open the door in the Queen's name."

Meanwhile, the little maid within, awakened by the first and second knocking, had much ado to arouse the sleeping dame, although she "shogged" her, crying, "The watch is at the door and hath knocked twice." As soon, however, as she had fairly taken in the meaning of the ominous words, Agnes Wardall, hurriedly clothing herself, ran down to the inner parlour, where was a cupboard "with a fair press," into which the maid locked her.

And now, as the knocking became more violent, the young servant, looking from a window, held the enemy at bay while she parried their questions. Whether she was to blame for following

the example of the woman of Jericho, who, while the spies were still in hiding on the roof of the house, declared that they had gone away, it is hardly for us to judge, but, dissatisfied with her answers, the watch threatened to break down the door unless it was immediately opened. Upon this, she at length descended and let in the unwelcome visitors, who proceeded at once to search the house.

First they entered a parlour on the ground floor, tenanted by a woman and her infant child. In rude haste the men flung themselves into the room, careless to spare the feelings of the startled woman. Hunting the place through they did not forget the possibilities of accommodation which the ample chimney might provide, but peered up into its deep recesses till they were satisfied that it was empty.

All this time poor Agnes, locked into the press, could hear the gradual advance of their heavy feet as they neared her hiding place. Too well she knew what hung upon her discovery. If found, she had already taken a last farewell of her precious babes, and for herself nothing remained but the terrible prospect of death by burning. She could hear their voices demanding of the woman whether anyone beside herself had laid there that night, and then the door of the inner parlour is burst open, and they are actually in the room with the object of their search.

Now will God have mercy upon her in this her hour of extremity? The press is very narrow, and the air is becoming exhausted. She is faint from fear and want of breath, and the beating of her heart may almost be heard as one of the company, laying his hand on the cupboard, says, "This is a fair cupboard, she may be here for anything that is done." To which another answers, "That is true."

At this, however, marvellous to relate, they left the room, to continue the search elsewhere, and, going upstairs to the chamber in which Agnes and her children had slept, were again

disappointed, and at length descended to the yard. Here they found her horse tethered, and they again questioned the maid, who stoutly refused to give any information. A lad, who was asleep in an outhouse, was suddenly awakened, and catechised as to the whereabouts of his mistress, but neither could they learn anything from him.

At length, supposing that the poor woman had really left the house, some of the watch proceeded to the neighbour's premises, while others searched the Cornhill, which, with its many irregular buildings and covered ways, would at that time have afforded effectual refuge. While this was going on the maid and the boy were kept in durance.

Meanwhile, Agnes Wardall, immured in the narrow press, was in danger of suffocation, and cried out to her mother's tenant, who entered the parlour, to let her out as speedily as possible, but first the key had to be found, and then, for her nervous haste, the woman could not turn it in the lock. It seemed to the frightened woman within that to die in such a way would be worse than to have fallen into the hands of her pursurers, and she prayed of the woman to seek for a chisel with which to break open the cupboard. But no chisel was at hand, nor anything else by which the lock might be forced. In this terrible extremity she could only call upon God to deliver her. Then said she, "Essay again to open it, for I trust God will give you power to open it."

Calmed, perhaps, by her prayer, the woman now turned the key in the lock easily, and, fainting and exhausted and looking as one already dead, Agnes came out of her place of concealment. But she dared not remain in the house, so, passing out into the fields behind the garden, she cowered down in a ditch of nettles, drawing a buckram apron over her head.

After a while two of the watch, returning from the Cornhill, entered the field, and one of them espied her, but being friendly-disposed in his heart, made a noise with his bill to

warn her to remain still. Presently they left the field, and the search at last being given up, the maid and the young lad were released. On the morrow her kind protector, George Manning by name, sent word, advising Agnes Wardall not to remain any longer so near the house.

How she managed to conceal herself for the following two years we are not told, but on the death of Queen Mary, she could safely and happily return to her home in Ipswich, and that she did so is probable, as it is incidentally mentioned that her mother's tenant was with her at her death long afterwards, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

In an old graveyard in St. Clement's the dust of Agnes Wardwall probably sleeps. We should like to know the spot and to honour it as the resting-place of one who preferred enduring hardness with the people of God to living in ease and comfort at the sacrifice of conscience.*

The history of Argentine was strangely chequered. He was alternately Papist and Protestant, according to the tenets of the monarch, who happened to be reigning at the time. From usher at the Ipswich Grammar School, in Henry VIII's reign, he advanced to the position of master. Afterwards he showed his loyalty to Queen Mary, by painting the posts of the town with "Vivat Regina Maria," and was made priest, finally shewing himself again a "perfect Protestant," when the accession of Queen Elizabeth made this change advisable.

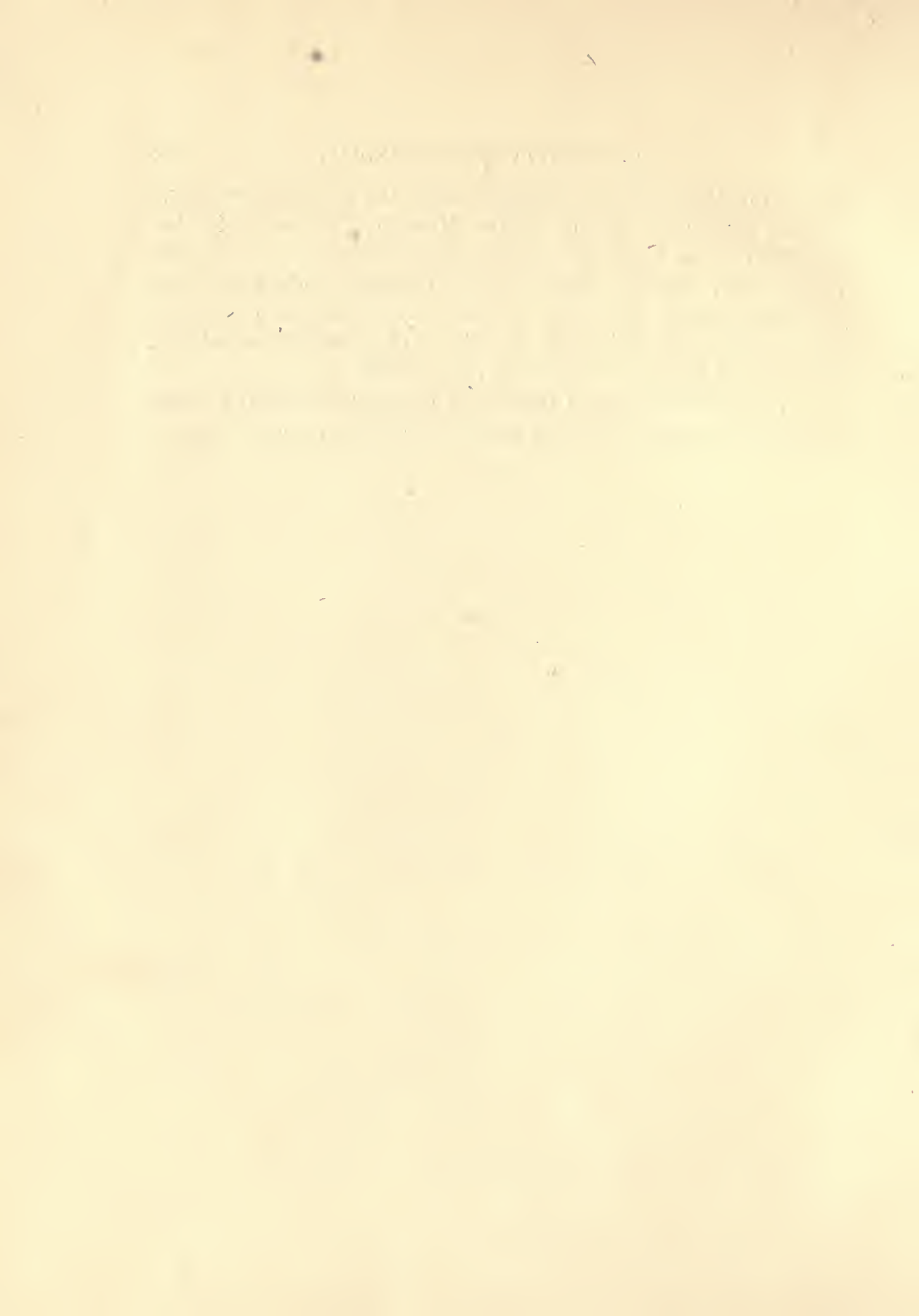
Over four hundred years have passed away since he and Matthew Butler met on the Cornhill on that eventful night. The old Cross has gone with that other that succeeded it. The Shambles, followed by the less substantial Rotunda, and afterwards by the old Corn Exchange, have long since disappeared, and St. Mildred's Church, the old Mote Hall, survives only in pictures.

There is no pillory now in which wretched victims stand to

*A Copy of the Will of Robert Wardall, sen., father-in-law of Agnes, has been found and copied for me by Mr. Redstone, Secretary of the Suffolk Archæological Society, It is dated 1554.

endure the insults of an unfeeling mob, and the cruel stocks are harmless objects of curiosity in the Museum. A Constable, less sanguinary be it hoped, if not less alert watches on the Cornhill o'nights, and probably finds the Post Office and Town Hall picturesque enough for him. Down in St. Clement's the people sleep peacefully in their beds, for liberty of conscience is enjoyed, and it is no longer a crime to possess a Bible.

Pray God the reign of peace may continue, and charity be the watchword of every member of Christ's Church here upon earth.



THE MIRACULOUS ROOD OF DOVERCOURT.



The Miraculous Rood of Dovercourt.

ON a certain night in the year 1532, three men of Dedham left their homes for a mid-night walk to Dovercourt. It was clear and frosty, so records tell us, and the moon rode high in the heavens. The names of the men were, respectively, Robert King, Nicholas Marsh, and Robert Gardener.

Presently they were joined by one, Robert Debnam, of East Bergholt, and together they started to cover the distance of ten miles, as fast as eager feet could carry them.

Six months later three dead men hung on the gibbets—one at Burchet in Dedham, one at Cataway-Cawsey, and one at Dovercourt; and the names of the three men were Robert King, Robert Debnam, and Nicholas Marsh, the fourth was in hiding. There is no story of sordid crime, however, connected with their memories. They were godly peasants, who had listened to the preaching of Thomas Rose, of Hadley, and were about to put into practice the lessons they had learned.

Perhaps it was time that some check should be given to the growing credulity of the people, and to the deceptions being practised upon them, for so sunk in superstition had they become, that no fable was too unreal to be believed, and no trickery too transparent to delude them. If images had at first been introduced into the worship of the sanctuary, to assist the mind to a spiritual realisation of the unseen world, they were at this time in very deed actually worshipped, and the unlearned and ignorant were encouraged to believe in their miraculous powers.

One of the most flagrant instances of the kind was the famous rood at Boxley, in Kent, "which used to smile and bow, or frown and shake its head, as its worshippers were generous or close-handed." Then there was Our Lady of Walsingham, Our Lady of Wilsdon, and Our Lady of Ipswich, all three of which were afterwards specially held up as warnings to the idolatrous in the fourteenth Church Homily. But hardly less famous than any of these was the wonderful rood at All Saints' Church, Dovercourt. To this ancient 12th century edifice, which is still standing, pilgrims from all quarters made their way, anxious to propitiate an image possessed of such marvellous powers as those with which it was accredited.

Day and night the door of the Church stood open, for no one dared to close it, because they, "verily believed none, without great danger (even of sudden death) to themselves, might attempt to shut the Church doors upon it."

But the men of Dedham and East Bergholt were not afraid. Together with many others of those early Protestants, they had lost faith in the pretended virtues of images which were the work of their own fingers. Of such David had declared, "they have hands, but they handle not, feet have they but they walk not."

If indeed, the rood at Dovercourt were strong enough to hold the church door open, or visit with sudden death any who attempted to close it, then surely it could at least defend itself from destruction. But this they would prove, and prove it not only for themselves, but for the lasting enlightenment of all who now resorted to it in worship.

Their hearts beat fast as they entered Dovercourt that night. It was not in a mere spirit of adventure that the journey was made, but because we are told, their "consciences, were sore burdened to see the honour and power of the Almighty God so to be blasphemed by such an idol." There was too much at stake to allow of so dangerous an enterprise being undertaken

lightly. All around them death was being dealt out as the sure reward of heresy. At Colchester, martyrs were being gathered in thick as sheaves of corn. At Norwich and Ipswich the same story was repeated, and many a neighbouring village added some humble saint to the lengthening roll of the "noble army."

So it was with their lives in their hands that these four men at last approached the porch of All Saints' Church on that eventful night. The door stood open as usual, and it must have been with feelings akin to awe that they entered the building, and peered into the dimly lighted interior.

Superstition dies hard, especially in the minds of simple country folk, and to cross the fatal threshold required no common courage. Before them looming large and dreadful in the ghostly light, was the image which superstition had degraded into an idol, and this they had come to remove.

How this was accomplished, we are not told; we only know that, besides the rood, "there was nothing taken away from the Church but his coat, his shoes, and the tapers." So, with this strange burden upon their shoulders, the men passed out of the door, carrying it "about a quarter of a mile thence, as far as the green," where "they struck fire with a flintstone," and set it alight, with the aid of the tapers.

We can picture the consternation of the inhabitants of Dovercourt, when it was discovered what had happened, for now "the hope of their gains was gone," and it would soon be noised abroad that the wonder-working image was but another pitiful device to play upon the credulity of the people.

To find and punish the perpetrators of the deed was the first thing to be done, and a diligent search was accordingly made. Suspicion naturally fell upon Thomas Rose, who, at the great risk of his own freedom, never shrank from "inveighing vehemently against images"; but no proofs could be found that he had instigated the action.

When, at last, three of the men were tracked out and

apprehended, they were promised their lives on one condition namely, that they would accuse Rose of being confederate with them, but this they steadfastly refused to do. The first excitement of the daring deed being now over, nothing remained to them but to face the death of felons, yet these heroic souls never faltered. They had done what they conceived to be their duty to God and to their fellows, and would not be tempted to transfer their own responsibility to another.

And so the end came, and in three different spots the people assembled to see how these men would conduct themselves in that last great trial of their courage, and this is the record left of them; "which three persons, through the Spirit of God, at their death, did more edify the people in godly learning, than all the sermons that had been preached there a long time before."

Thomas Rose must have been deeply touched by their devotion, for we find him afterwards almost courting identification with the sufferers, by sending for "the coat" that had belonged to the rood, and burning it himself. He was, thereupon, charged with being "privy of the burning of the rood of Dovercourt," and committed to prison in the Bishop of Lincoln's House in Holburn. "The stocks were very high and great, so that day and night he did lie with his back on the ground, upon a little straw, with his heels so high, that by this means the blood was fallen from his feet; his feet were almost without sense for a long time; and he herewith waxed very sick, insomuch that his keeper, pitying his estate, and hearing him cry sometimes, through the extremity of pain, went to the Bishop, and told him he would not keep him to die under his hand; and upon this he had more ease and liberty."

To recount all the vicissitude through which this minister of Hadley passed, would be to fill a volume, and though by the death of Queen Mary he finally escaped with his life, it was through much tribulation, and after having been driven hither and thither, destitute, afflicted and tormented.

Before criticising the actions of the pioneers of religious liberty, it is necessary to have a sympathetic acquaintance with the conditions of the times in which they lived.

It was Froude, the historian, who, commenting upon the fate of these very Suffolk peasants, said: "Men who dare to be first in great movements are ever self-immolated victims. But," he adds, "I suppose that it were better for them to be bleaching on the gibbets than crawling at the feet of a wooden rood, and believing it to be God."



A BILL ON IPSWICH TOWN HALL.



A Bill on Ipswich Town Hall.

THE Cornhill was not so brilliantly lighted up at night in 1546 as it is now, otherwise someone who was stealthily making his way to the door of the old Town Hall on the Friday night before Gang Monday would have been discovered, and his object frustrated. Creeping along unobserved, he reached the place, and proceeded to nail up a bill which would astonish the people of Ipswich by its audacity on the following morning. This was the wording of it:—

“Juste judicate filii hominum: Yet, when ye shall judge, minister your justice with mercy.

“A fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God: Be ye learned, therefore, in true knowledge, ye that judge the earth, lest the Lord be angry with you.

“The blood of the righteous shall be required at your hands. What though the veil hanged before Moses' face, yet at Christ's death it fell down.

“The stones will speak if these should hold their peace: Therefore harden not your hearts against the verity. For fearfully shall the Lord appear in the day of vengeance to the troubled in conscience. No excuse shall then be of ignorance. Therefore, have remorse in your conscience; fear Him that may kill both body and soul.

“Beware of innocent blood-shedding; take heed of justice ignorantly administered; work discreetly as the Scripture doth command; look to it that ye make not the truth to be forsaken.

“We beseech God to save our King, King Henry the Eighth, that he be not led into temptation. So be it.”

As soon as the bill was discovered in the morning it was taken down, and brought to Lord Wentworth, whose business it was on that day to judge the cause of two men, Kerby and Roger, both of whom stood accused of not accepting the doctrine

of transubstantiation as set forth in the terrible Act of the Six Articles. It was not altogether a good preparation for the stern work that he had in hand and his answer that "the bill was good council," seems to show that his heart was hardly in the task.

Meanwhile in the Westgate Gaol the two prisoners were awaiting their trial. The friendly gaoler, Bird, was, we may be sure, doing his best to encourage them, for he himself had already narrowly escaped a similar fate, and later on would suffer a like accusation at the hands of the Commissioners.

In days when the sacredness of life was of so little account, and when mercy was a rare quality, it is refreshing to come upon even a hint of compassion from those in power towards the sufferers, and we welcome every sign of it. Young Robert Wingfield and Master Breuss, of Wenham, showed a gracious gentleness of character when they visited Kerby in the gaol, and did their best to save him from his fate.

"Remember," said Master Wingfield, "The fire is hot; take heed of thine enterprise, that thou take no more upon thee than thou shalt be able to perform. The terror is great, the pain will be extreme; and life is sweet. Better it were betimes to stick to mercy, while there is hope of life, than rashly to begin, and then to shrink."

To whom Kerby made answer:—"Oh, Master Wingfield, be at my burning, and you shall say, 'There standeth a Christian soldier in the fire.' For I know that fire and water and sword and all other things, are in the hands of God, and he will suffer no more to be laid upon us, than he will give us strength to bear."

There is something very touching in the final words of the young heir of Humphrey Wingfield.

"Ah, Kerby!" said he, "if thou be at that point, I will bid thee farewell, for I promise thee I am not so strong that I am able to burn."

We hear in them that sensitiveness to human pain which makes the sufferings of another a real mental experience to the one who sympathises, and we can almost see the expression of pained compassion on the face of the young man as he turns away, after grasping the prisoner's hand in farewell, and promising to "pray for him."

The day soon arrived when judgment was to be passed upon the offenders. The Justices were assembled in the Town Hall, and next but one to Lord Wentworth sat the Commissary. All eyes were now turned on the prisoners, who prepared themselves for the ordeal through which they were to pass by "making their prayers secretly to God for a space of time," with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven.

Then the articles were read to them, but they could not even assent to the first. In it on pain of "death by burning, without any abjuration, benefit of the clergy, or sanctuary," they were to accept the declaration that "after the consecration there is present really the natural body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, conceived of the Virgin Mary and that after the said consecration there remaineth no substance of bread and wine," etc.

To this they both replied that "they did not so believe," and "that there was neither flesh nor blood to be eaten with the teeth, but bread and wine; and yet more than bread and wine, for that it is consecrated to a holy use."

Foster, the justice who lived at Copdock, on the London Road, was one of their sorest adversaries at this time. He it was who was afterwards instrumental in bringing both Rowland Taylor and Robert Samuel to their death, and we find him throughout the history of these times a zealous, though ignorant, servant of the Bishops then in power.

Still it fell to Lord Wentworth to pronounce the final judgment upon the men, and the whole of his conduct at this time, as afterwards, was suggestive of an inward remorse that he could

ill conceal. Perhaps the words of the bill, which had been posted on the Town Hall, came to his memory, and especially the warning, "Beware of innocent blood-shedding." At any rate, after he had pronounced the cruel sentence of death something appeared to be troubling his mind.

Doubtless the behaviour of Kerby was touching to witness. Holding up his hands, and bowing himself devoutly with most humble reverence, he merely ejaculated: "Praised be Almighty God," and then there followed a profound silence, for he stood still "without any more words."

Perhaps to relieve the tension of feeling, or to hide his own emotion, the judge leant behind one of his companions and addressed some remarks in a whisper to another. This was noticed by Roger, who challenged him to say it openly if anything was on his conscience, but "somewhat flushing and changing his countenance," Lord Wentworth answered, "I did speak nothing of you, nor have I done anything unto you but as the law is."

And so the sentence stood, that Kerby was to be burned in Ipswich on the following Saturday, and Roger at Bury on the Gang Monday after.

* * * * *

A great crowd collected on the Cornhill or Market Place, as it was called, to witness the spectacle, not so common then as it was to become afterwards. About two thousand people had assembled, and in the gallery of the "Shambles" a large company, including most of the neighbouring justices, were to be seen.

The upper part of this building had evidently been constructed with a view to affording accommodation for sight-seers, and from this convenient grand stand privileged people could at their ease witness the various entertainments provided for them on the Cornhill. Now it would be a bull-baiting, for no animal was to

be slaughtered for food without it had been baited for an hour on this arena; or again, some unfortunate trespasser, either man or woman, must be tied to a cart-tail and whipped round the town, as much apparently for the base amusement of the onlookers as for the profit of the wretched victims.

Altogether there were stirring scenes in Ipswich in "those good old times" which kept the population in a continual state of excitement, albeit of no very healthy order. But nothing so stimulated the imagination, or aroused such a variety of emotions, as when some human sacrifice was about to be made. Among those who thronged to witness the dying agonies of these martyrs for the faith, there were some who were moved as much by pity as curiosity, but with many a bigoted religious hatred could only be satisfied by the death of the offender.

Soon all is in readiness, from every window eager faces are peering out, and not a coign of vantage anywhere has been overlooked. In the midst is a stake fixed to the ground, and around it wood, broom and straw are heaped.

The prisoner Kerby has just arrived, and is being fastened with irons so that there may be no escape, and now for a moment the eyes of the multitude are turned towards the gallery of the "Shambles." There stands Dr. Rugham, formerly a monk of Bury, in surplice and stole, and when he begins to speak a silence falls on the crowd, and every ear is strained to catch the words that fall rather haltingly from his lips. He takes his sermon from the 6th chapter of St. John, not without occasional interruption from Kerby, who, according to his statements, tells the people either to "believe him," or again, that what he is saying "is not true."

Thus by degrees the tide turns against the monk, and he cannot help feeling that the sympathy of the onlookers is with the man at the stake. This is not altogether a comfortable position to be in, so with a last effort to justify the proceedings, the monk calls upon the prisoner once more to declare before

the people his belief with regard to the sacrament of the Mass. Without hesitation Kerby answers as before, after which the Under-Sheriff asks—

“Hast thou anything more to say?”

“Yea, sir, if you will give me leave,” is the answer.

To which the Sheriff replies, “Say on.”

The final act in the tragedy is now approaching. A hush of breathless attention sweeps over the crowd. They must not lose a word of this last confession, or a single thrill of emotion that may be communicated from the lips of the man who is about to die. Will there be a struggle, after all, to save the life that is so precious to every human being? As he feels the check of the iron chain that holds him to the stake, will a sudden agonised longing for liberty make him falter?

Here are thousands of spectators drawing the breath of life freely, and but vaguely sensible of the value of the possession which is theirs, and here in the midst is the one victim who is to resign life with all its sweetness. For another minute he will stand before them, a sentient human being, heir of all the universe; presently a few poor ashes will be stirred by the wind, and pass away. “Then Kerby, taking his cap from his head, put it under his arm as though it should have done him service again; but, remembering himself, he cast it from him, and lifting up his arms he said the hymn, “Te Deum,” and the Belief, with other prayers in the English tongue.” At this point Lord Wentworth, who had manfully struggled with his gentler feelings, was completely overcome. Shrouding himself behind one of the posts of the gallery, as though ashamed of his weakness, the judge wept, and at the sight tears sprang into the eyes of many of the beholders.

And well might the judge weep. To him it had fallen to pronounce the words of doom, and now he must perforce be a witness of the last agonies of a man whose whole demeanour stamped him as a true sufferer for conscience sake.



By kind permission of John Glyde.

“SHROUDING HIMSELF BEHIND ONE OF THE POSTS OF THE GALLERY, . . . THE JUDGE WEPT.”



If only, when this final opportunity of speech was given him, the victim had broken out in violent invective or hurled bitter reproaches at his accusers, it would have been easier to have borne it unmoved, but there was something infinitely pathetic in the sudden outburst of praise and prayer to God. In this supreme moment it was evident that the soul of the martyr was lifted above his surroundings, and he was conscious only of the presence of the just and Almighty Judge of all the earth, before whom he was shortly to appear. His rapt spirit exulted in the contemplation. This was no longer the gate of death, but the door of Heaven. With a hymn on his lips, he must enter into the Holy City; and so, with hands uplifted, oblivious of the curious eyes of the bystanders, he breaks forth, in the words of the service with which he is so familiar—

We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.
 All the earth doth worship Thee, the Father everlasting.
 To Thee all angels cry aloud,
 The Heavens and all the powers therein.
 To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do cry;
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabbaoth,
 Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory.
 The glorious Company of the Apostles praise Thee.
 The goodly fellowship of the prophets praise Thee.
 The noble army of martyrs praise Thee.

—And so he continues, until the last verse of the hymn sums up his faith in the beautiful words, “O Lord, in Thee have I trusted; let me never be confounded.”

But the fire takes time to kindle, and once more he is profoundly and humanly conscious that the end is approaching, and that he is but an unworthy sinner, about to pass into the presence of his Maker.

With a loud cry to God, which must have pierced the very heart of the remorseful judge, he beats on his breast, like the publican of old, and in this attitude of becoming humility continues “so long as his remembrance would serve.” Then the flames kindle upon him, and his dry lips refuse any longer to

give utterance, and in a chariot of fire his soul passes into the unseen world.

But the heart of that great throng of people gathered on the Cornhill has been beating in sympathy with the heart of the sufferer, and when the fire has done its worst a great shout of admiration goes up from them, and they bless and praise God for giving such constancy to one "so simple and so unlettered."

From the gallery of the Shambles a crowd of fashionable spectators are descending, and among them we seem to watch the sensitive countenance of the Lord Wentworth struggling to maintain a callous demeanour, while his conscience sorely reproaches him for this day's work. Truly, he has done nothing to the man but "as the law is," but is there not yet another law, and another Monarch, to whom he must answer for the deed? Whether any such thoughts passed through the mind of the judge we cannot certainly tell, but we may, in charity, hope that those tears of his were not wasted that were shed for poor Kerby on the Ipswich Cornhill.

THE HERO OF HADLEIGH.



The Hero of Hadleigh.

CHAPTER I.

IT was the Tuesday after Palm Monday, early in the reign of Queen Mary, when the bells of Hadleigh* Church rang to service. From his chamber,† where he sat "studying the Word of God," Rowland Taylor, the "parson," arose in haste, and came to the Church, to find the doors shut and barred.

Only by the chancel door could he gain admission, and the sight which then met his eyes filled him with indignation. Before a newly-erected altar stood a stranger priest, John Averth, of Aldham, about to celebrate Mass, and around him armed men were placed, with swords ready drawn to prevent any interference. There, too, was Foster, of Copdock, who is described as "a steward and keeper of the courts," and whose name is familiar in connection with many a Suffolk martyr.

We know enough of the character of the celebrated minister of Hadleigh to anticipate the scene which followed. A bold and fearless man, zealous for the truth, and deeply imbued with the teaching of Thomas Bilney, he could not stand meekly by and witness the re-introduction of the Mass into the Church for which he held himself responsible. Burning with righteous anger, Dr. Taylor denounced the rite as "profane and abominable idolatry," and challenged the priest to show what right he had to usurp the place of the appointed shepherd of the flock.

*Formerly spelt Hadley.

†Dr. Taylor's study may still be seen at the Deanery, Hadleigh.

Upon this Foster started up with an "ireful and furious countenance," crying out, "Thou traitor, what dost thou here, to let and disturb the Queen's proceeding?"

A heated altercation now ensued, and the solemn silence of the fine old church was broken by the sound of angry voices. For a moment the priest of Aldham hesitated to proceed as Dr. Taylor warned him that by the Canon Law, no Mass could be said "but at a consecrated altar," but John Clark, of Hadleigh, was equal to the occasion.

"Master Averth," he said, "be not afraid, you have a 'super-altare.' Go forth with your business, man."

Dr. Taylor's wife, who had followed her husband into the church, now saw the armed men close around him, and he was led with strong hands out of the church, "and thrust violently from the door."

It needed no prophetic sense to recognise in this proceeding the beginning of the end. Kneeling upon the floor, this poor woman cried with a loud voice, "I beseech Thee, God, the righteous Judge, to avenge this injury to the blood of Christ." They then thrust her out of the church also, and shut the doors; "for they feared that the people would have rent their sacrificer in pieces."

We can hardly wonder at the strong feeling of resentment experienced by the inhabitants of the town who witnessed the treatment to which their beloved minister was subject, for Dr. Taylor had, indeed, been a very father in God to his people. Ever ready to help the needy and afflicted, he gave liberally of his substance to the poor, and his generous heart overflowed with sympathy.

Moreover, he was a singularly gifted man, being "a Doctor, both in Civil and Canon laws," and a scholar and divine of no mean reputation. To his private virtues his biographer bears eloquent testimony. "Not only was his word a preaching, but all his life and conversation was an example of unfeigned Christian life and true holiness.

“He was void of all pride, humble, and meek as a child, so that none were so poor but they might boldly, as unto their Father, resort unto him; neither was his lowliness childish or fearful, but as occasion, time and place required, he would be stout in rebuking the sinful and evil-doers; so that none were so rich, but he would tell him plainly his fault, with such earnest and grave rebukes as became a good curate and pastor.

“He was a man very mild, void of all rancour, grudge or evil will, ready to do good to all men, readily forgiving his enemies, and never sought to do evil to any.” To all this was added a sense of humour, which did not forsake him even when he was nearing the last act in his life’s drama. It was no wonder that the people loved their genial minister, and showed their appreciation of his earnest labours among them.

Perhaps in no other town was the Bible studied so diligently and intelligently as it was in Hadleigh at this time. It is said that many a man might have been found who “had often read the whole Bible through, and could have said a great sort of St. Paul’s epistles by heart.” Whole households were carefully trained in this way, and taught to be able to give a reason for the faith that was in them. To Hadleigh also belongs the distinction of having been one of the very first towns in all England to have accepted the Protestant religion.

Very peacefully the days passed there while young Edward reigned, but hardly had the passing bell told of his soul’s release before there was a stirring among the Roman Catholics, and ominous signs that perilous days were at hand.

Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, was only one of many whose consciences troubled them but little when a new oath to a new Monarch suddenly transformed Protestants into Catholics or *vice versa*. Now, when a complaint was made to him of Dr. Taylor’s adherence to the reformed religion, the man who had alternately sworn allegiance to Henry VIII. and Edward VI. was as ready, and perhaps with more fidelity, to

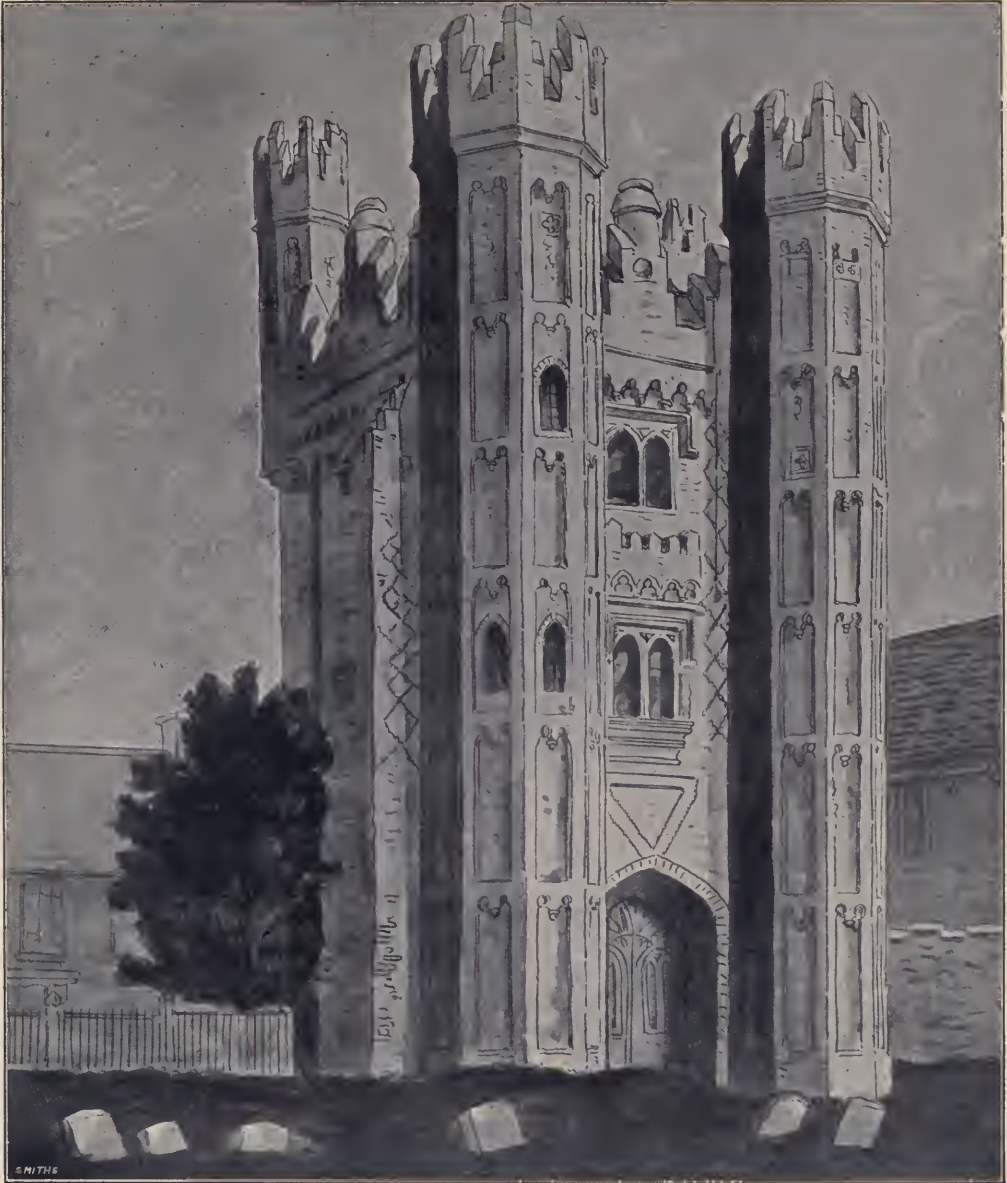
serve the interests of the Catholic Queen Mary. Dr. Taylor was commanded to appear before him within certain days.

At this his friends were filled with anxiety and grief, and many besought him to fly. The Chancellor, they urged, was fierce and cruel, and nothing would await him but imprisonment and cruel death. But all their efforts were unavailing. "Dear friends," he said, "I most heartily thank you for that you have so tender a care over me. And although I know that there is neither justice nor truth to be looked for at my adversaries' hands, but rather imprisonment and cruel death, yet I know my cause to be so good and righteous, and the truth so strong upon my side, that I will, by God's grace, go and appear before them, and to their beards resist their false doing."

Still they continued to urge him with arguments that to a weaker man would have been a sore temptation. "We think," they said, "that in fleeing at this time ye should do best, keeping yourself against another time, when the Church shall have great need of such diligent teachers and godly pastors." But, like the aged Paul of old on his journey to Jerusalem, where stripes and imprisonment awaited him, Rowland Taylor gently persisted in the course he had chosen, and so with weeping eyes they commended him unto God, and within a few days the journey to London was taken.

Our minds conjure up the farewell scene with wistful tenderness. From the picturesque old Rectory House, with its splendid battlemented tower, the venerable figure passes, accompanied by his faithful servant, John Hull. Now, without let or hindrance the people may gaze on the countenance they love, but almost for the last time, for when next they flock into the streets of Hadleigh to see Dr. Taylor on his way to execution, his face will be concealed in a close hood, "with two holes for his eyes to look out at, and a slit for his mouth to breathe out."

It would be tedious to dwell at any length upon his



From a sketch by Hamlet Watling.

“FROM THE PICTURESQUE OLD RECTORY HOUSE, WITH ITS SPLENDID BATTLEMENTED TOWER, THE VENERABLE FIGURE PASSES.”



examination, for in a large majority of cases the same formula of accusation against the clergy was employed. He defended the marriages of priests, and denied transubstantiation and the supremacy of the Pope.

For a long time he lay a prisoner in the King's Bench, but even here he found reason to thank God for His mercy. He occupied his time in prayer, reading the Scriptures, and preaching to his fellow-prisoners. Among them, to his great consolation, he found "Master Bradford, a devout and virtuous preacher," and so "they both together lauded God, and continued in prayer, reading and exhorting one the other, insomuch that Dr. Taylor told his friends that came to visit him that God had most graciously provided for him, to send him to that prison, where he found such an angel of God, to be in his company to comfort him."

At length he was cited to appear before the Lord Chancellor and other commissioners. The particulars of this examination are preserved in letters of Dr. Taylor's to friends, describing minutely all that he could remember of the interviews. His defence is full of spirit, courage, and learning. Yet again a fourth time he was brought before the Bishops of Winchester, Norwich, London, Salisbury, and Durham, when a final and determinate answer was required before sentence should be given. Bradford and Saunders were with him, and not one of the three flinched. When the Bishops saw that they were immovable, they no longer delayed, and sentence of death was passed. This was the signal for an outburst of praise as "they most joyfully gave thanks to God."

Dr. Taylor was then conveyed to the "Clink," and the keepers had instructions "straitly to keep him." From the "Clink" he was removed before night to the "Compter," and there remained for about a week.

The story of the degradation by Bonner is characteristic of both the men. It was the custom in degrading a priest from

his office to clothe him in the vestments used during the celebration of the Mass, and then to strip them from him.

For this purpose Bonner visited him, and he was brought from his prison to another chamber in the same building. One more chance was given him of revoking his decision, but with no effect, and the Bishop then proceeded with his task.

"Well," quoth he, "I am come to degrade you, wherefore put on these vestments."

"No!" quoth Dr. Taylor, "I will not!"

"Wilt thou not?" said the Bishop. "I shall make thee ere I go."

Quoth Dr. Taylor, "You shall not, by the grace of God."

After charging him upon his obedience to do as he was commanded, and still being met with firm refusal, the Bishop caused another to array him in the vestures and ornaments of the Mass. To this he submitted, and then setting his hands to his sides and walking up and down, he said "How say you my Lord, am not I a goodly fool?" and turning to the rest he said "How say you my masters? If I were in Cheap should I not have boys enough to laugh at these apish toys and toying trumpery?"

It now remained for the Bishop to strike him on the breast with his crosier while he uttered the curse upon him, but his chaplain, eyeing the stalwart form of the goodly veteran, hastily interfered, saying "My Lord! strike him not, for he will sure strike again."

Even at this critical moment, the humour of the position struck Dr. Taylor. For a minute at least Bonner, who was a terror to all Protestants, was at his mercy, and was frightened of his prisoner. He could not refrain from acting on the Chaplain's suggestion, "Yea, by St. Peter will I," quoth he. "The cause is Christ's, and I were no good Christian if I would not fight in my Master's quarrel."

Afterwards, when he came up to his chamber, where Bradford

also lay, he told him how he had made the Bishop of London afraid, "for," saith he laughingly, "his Chaplain gave him counsel not to strike me with his crosier-staff, for that I would strike again; and by my troth," said he, rubbing his hands, "I made him believe I would do so indeed."

So the Bishop cursed him, but struck him not, upon which Dr. Taylor said, "Though you do curse me, yet God doth bless me. I have the witness of my conscience that ye have done me wrong and violence, and yet I pray God, if it be His will, to forgive you."

After this came his wife, his son, and his faithful servant, John Hull, to sup with him, and with weeping eyes they prayed together and kissed one another. Then, as a parting present to his wife, he gave her a book of the Church Service, set out by King Edward, which he had daily used during his imprisonment. To his son Thomas he gave a Latin book "containing the notable sayings of the old martyrs," and in the end of the book wrote his will and testament.



CHAPTER II.

FEBRUARY is not a month in which one would choose to spend a night in a church porch, and yet, in the year 1555, a woman and two children might have been seen at St. Botolph's Church, Aldgate, waiting till two o'clock in the morning on the chance of catching a glimpse of someone who was to pass that way.

Dr. Taylor's wife and his daughter Mary, with their adopted child Elizabeth, an orphan on whom the minister had taken pity, were watching in case he should be led to the Woolsack, an inn near by, on his way through Essex to Suffolk. It was a very dark morning, and impossible to see the passers-by, but presently, at a cry from Elizabeth, Mrs. Taylor recognised her husband, in company with the sheriff. She called him by name, and the Sheriff, touched by the sound of her voice, bade his man "stay a little that he might speak to his wife."

It was only a minute snatched by the way, but Dr. Taylor's first impulse, after taking his daughter Mary in his arms, was to kneel down, that they might pray together to the God in whose hands were their destinies; and the Sheriff turned away to hide his emotion, as the simple words of the Lord's Prayer were uttered. Then followed the last solemn farewell. Full of strength and comfort in his soul, Dr. Taylor gently sought to comfort his wife, and blessing his daughter Mary, prayed that God would make her His servant.

Then the procession passed on its way, but the faithful wife kept pace with it, and even managed to gain the chamber in which her husband was to be kept "with four yeomen of the guard and the Sheriff's men."

Deeply as he pitied the poor woman, the Sheriff could not permit her to remain, and she was finally conducted to her mother's house, who promised to keep her there till they came again. As no mention is afterwards made of Mrs. Taylor, it is probable that this was the last she saw of her husband.

As he rode forth from the inn at 11 o'clock his little son Thomas stood at the rails with John Hull to take a last look at his father, and being lifted and set on his horse by the faithful servant, Dr. Taylor raised his eyes to Heaven and prayed for his son. Then, "he laid his hand upon the child's head and blessed him."

All the way as they rode to Brentford, the yeomen of the guard were astonished at the cheerfulness and courage of their charge. He seemed like one going to "a most pleasant banquet or bridal," and when at length they were met by the Sheriff of Suffolk at Chelmsford, and he knew that he was yet another stage nearer the place of his execution, his spirit seemed to rise in exultation.

It was not only his close friends and those who were in sympathy with his teaching who felt the loveableness of his disposition, but we see very plainly that even those charged with his custody could not be insensible to the personal attraction of his original character.

Before he left him, the Sheriff of Essex made a final effort to dissuade him from his decision, urging that he was "a man of goodly personage and well beloved of all men, as well for his virtues as for his learning," and adding, "me thinketh it were a great pity you should cast away yourself willingly, and so come to such a painful and shameful death." They were at supper, and while promising that he and all his friends there assembled would be suitors to the Queen for his pardon, if he would only revoke his opinions, the Sheriff drank to him, and his example was copied by the yeomen of the guard. Then followed a scene which the company were not likely to forget,

for when the cup was handed to him, Dr. Taylor "staid a little as one studying what answer he might give."

It had not been an unknown thing for martyrs to falter at the approach of death, or, overwhelmed with the prospect of unendurable suffering, to recant at the last moment, and as the men watched his countenance a sudden hope sprang up in the heart of the Sheriff, which the Minister's first words encouraged.

"Master Sheriff and my masters all," he said, "I heartily thank you for your goodwill; I have hearkened to your words and marked well your counsels. And to be plain with you, I do perceive that I have deceived myself, and am like to deceive a great many of Hadley of their expectation."

"God's blessing on your heart," cried the Sheriff, "hold you there still. It is the comfortablest word that we have heard you speak yet. What! should ye cast away yourself in vain? Play a wise man's part, and I dare warrant it, ye shall find favour."

While the Sheriff congratulated himself that his words had taken effect, and the whole party, genuinely glad to have done with so unpopular a business, made merry and rejoiced, the subject of their jubilation held his peace, and bided his time. At length, anxious to know the exact meaning of his words—"Good Master Doctor," quoth the Sheriff, "what meant ye by this, that ye say ye think ye have been deceived yourself, and that ye shall deceive many in Hadley?"

"Would ye know my meaning plainly?" quoth he.

"Yea," quoth the Sheriff, "good Master Doctor, tell it us plainly."

It was a grim jest indeed that made the men "look one on another amazed," as they listened to the unexpected answer, but the dauntless spirit of the martyr was not subdued by his long confinement in prison.

We may not admire the humour that within so short a time of his death could play so lightly with the realities before him,

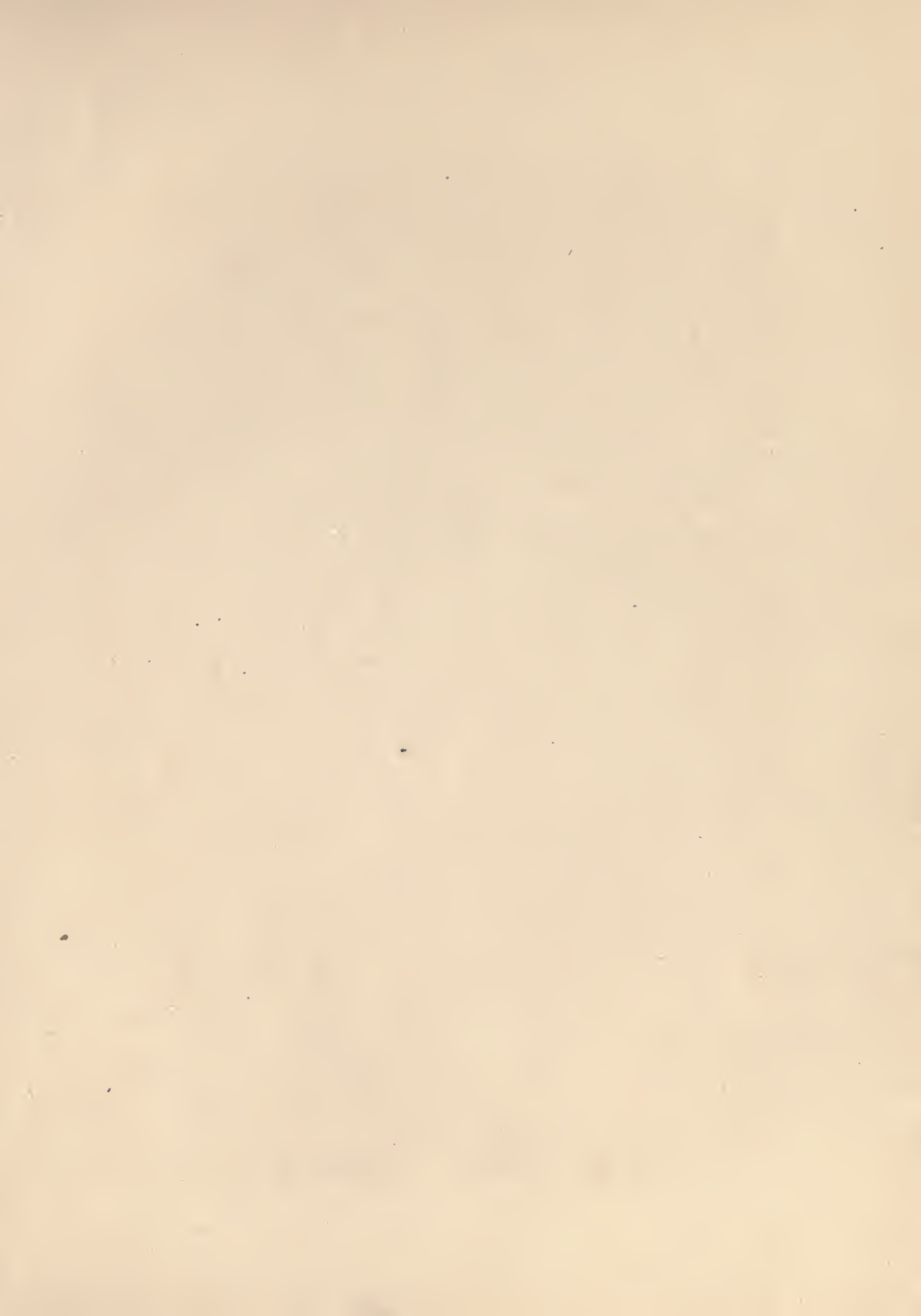
but the incident is so thoroughly characteristic of the man that to omit to mention it would be to fail to get a true idea of the many-sided character of the minister of Hadleigh.

“I will tell you how I have been deceived, and, as I think, I shall deceive a great many. I am, as you see, a man that hath a very great carcase, which I thought should have been buried in Hadley Churchyard, if I had died in my bed, as I well hoped I should have done; but herein I see I was deceived, and there are a great number of worms in Hadley Churchyard, which should have had jolly feeding upon this carrion, which they have looked for many a day. But now I know we be deceived, both I and they; for this carcase must be burnt to ashes; and so shall they lose their bait and feeding, that they looked to have had of it.”

After this the disappointed Sheriff handed over his charge to the Sheriff of Suffolk, who conducted him first to Lavenham. Here they stayed for two days, apparently in the hope that something might yet be done to stay the execution, for here “many gentlemen and justices upon great horses” arrived and laboured to bring Dr. Taylor to another mind. They had brought with them a pardon, ready to be delivered to him the instant he should yield, and promises of promotion and even of a Bishopric, if he would renounce the reformed religion. But their efforts were all in vain, so nothing remained but to proceed on the journey to Hadleigh, where he was to suffer.

When within two miles of the town, Dr. Taylor asked permission to dismount from his horse, which done “he leaped, and set a frisk or twain, as men commonly do in dancing.” This conduct naturally astonished the Sheriff, who inquired, “Why, Master Doctor, how do you now?” he answered, “Well, God be praised, good Master Sheriff, never better, for now I know I am almost at home. I lack not past two stiles to go over, and I am even at my Father’s house.”

The streets of Hadleigh were lined with people on either





"AFTER ASKING LEAVE OF THE SHERIFF TO SPEAK, AND BEING REFUSED, DR. TAYLOR DID SPEAK ONE LAST WORD TO THE PEOPLE."
See page 54.

side, anxious to catch a glimpse of the minister they loved, but his face was hidden in a close hood. Wailing and lamenting, they cried one to another, "Ah, good Lord! there goeth our shepherd from us, that so faithfully hath taught us, so fatherly hath cared for us, and so godly hath governed us. O merciful God, what shall we poor scattered lambs do? What shall come of this most wicked world? Good Lord, strengthen him and comfort him."

To whom Dr. Taylor answered: "I have preached to you God's word and truth, and am come this day to seal it with my blood." Then were the people very sharply rebuked by the Sheriff and his men.

Visitors to Hadleigh are probably acquainted with the George Street Almshouses, with their interesting little chapel, dating about 1490. It was as the procession passed this way that Dr. Taylor greeted the inmates who stood at the doors. Coming to the last house he missed the couple who dwelt there, and asked, "Is the blind man and blind woman that dwelt here alive?" Being answered in the affirmative, he threw his glove, containing all that remained of his money, in at the window, and so rode forth. And now they were approaching Aldham Common, where multitudes were assembled to witness the final scene.

I have stood but lately on the now quiet spot overlooking the town of Hadleigh. The larks sing in the open fields, and nature chants her sweetest lullaby over the sleeping ashes of the martyr. But on that very spot in the year 1555, an excited crowd awaited the arrival of the horsemen, who were seen wending their way up the hill from Hadleigh.

There were men there whose hearts were hot within them, and who learnt a lesson that day that remained with them till their own turn came to suffer, and one woman at least, who would presently risk the fury of the executioners, to kneel by the dying sufferer and uphold him with her simple prayers.

But now there is a stir and movement in the throng, as the people divide to let the horsemen pass. All eyes are fastened upon the central figure, but they may not see his features for the close hood which envelops his face. Now he is speaking, and the bystanders can catch the words. "What place is this?" he asks, "and what meaneth it that so much people are gathered hither?"

"It is Aldham Common, the place where you must suffer, and the people are come to look upon you," is the reply.

Then said he, "Thanked be God, I am even at home," and so alighted from his horse, and with both hands rent the hood from his head.

At sight of his venerable face, with the long white beard, many of the onlookers burst into weeping, crying out "God save thee, good Dr. Taylor!" "Jesus Christ strengthen thee, and keep thee," "The Holy Ghost comfort thee." It was commonly reported that, on pain of having his tongue cut out, he and others with him had made a promise of silence to the Council, but after asking leave of the Sheriff to speak, and being refused, Dr. Taylor did speak one last word to the people.

After preparing himself for the stake, he rose up, and said with a loud voice, "Good people, I have taught you nothing but God's Holy Word, and those lessons that I have taken out of God's Blessed Book, the Holy Bible, and I come hither this day to seal it with my blood."

A heavy stroke on the head from a "waster" was the result, and, seeing that he would not be permitted further to speak, he knelt down and prayed, then kissed the stake, and deliberately placed himself in a pitch barrel set for him, and so stood with his back to the stake. His eyes were raised to heaven, and his hands were folded.

As the faggots were being set up, Warwick, in ruthless cruelty, flung a faggot in his face, causing the blood to flow. At which gratuitous brutality Dr. Taylor exclaimed, "O friend, I have harm enough; what needed that?"





NAMES THAT WE MISS.



Names that we Miss.

It was a long journey that John Alcock was taking when he put his foot across the threshold of Hadleigh Church some 340 years ago. Not only was it to involve him in a ride to London within the following 24 hours, but after that it would mean a plunge from the light of day to the depth of the lowest dungeon, from the free gracious air of heaven to the fetid atmosphere of a prison such as Newgate was in those days.

Nor would that be the end of the journey, for though the young shearer would never again see the picturesque town of Hadleigh, and the doors of his terrible prison would only open that his poor dead body might be cast out into the fields, his soul already freed would have fled on that last long journey to the blessed country where there is no more pain, neither sorrow, nor crying.

That day as he stepped into the church, now very sacred to the memories of Rowland Taylor and Richard Yeoman, the martyred ministers of Hadleigh, his heart beat fast with painful emotion, and compassion for the sufferers had given place to indignation at their relentless persecutors.

Hardly three years had passed since that sad procession, escorting Dr. Taylor to his place of suffering, had left Hadleigh and passed along to Aldham Common, where the cruel deed of burning was perpetrated, and ever since that day this young disciple had done his simple best to supply the spiritual needs of the people by reading the prayers from the Prayer Book in English to those who came to listen.

A weeping crowd had followed the godly Rowland Taylor on that last sad journey, calling down blessings on the reverend head. They had seen him brutally struck by the attendants of the Sheriff, and heard his meek rejoinder when a wanton blow on the head made the precious life blood flow. And the men of Hadleigh could not easily forget the scene. Often in thought they saw it over again. The long stretch of common sloping away to the valley, the throng of heart-stricken villagers pressing around to catch a last glimpse of the minister they so deeply loved, and in the midst the stake firmly fixed into the ground to which the victim must be tied.

Was something of all this tragic recollection in the mind of John Alcock as he watched Newall, the priest, passing with the procession down Hadleigh Church? Was he thinking, too, of the aged Curate, Yeoman, whose face they missed from his accustomed place, and who had suffered in a like manner at Norwich, and of John Dale, the godly weaver, both of whom had been hurried to their death by the very man who was now before him?

Certainly these thoughts were uppermost in his mind, as the young shearer, markedly standing behind the font, refused to make any reverence as the procession passed by him.

Shall we say, "Wait a minute, John Alcock; consider what you are doing; remember that your life is in the hands of this man, and in another minute your fate will be sealed?"

Perhaps it would be useless, for he has had plenty of time for consideration, and the act is evidently deliberate and intended as a protest against the re-introduction of the Mass into the service of the Church. Of course the priest notices it, and equally, of course, swift retribution must follow.

Hardly has he reached the door with the procession than he returns, and, seizing the young man, calls aloud for the constable.

Now, it happened that Robert Rolfe, the Constable, was the master for whom young Alcock worked, and was himself in bad odour with the priest. Hearing his name called, he came forward, and thus addressed himself to Newall: "Master parson, what hath he done that ye are in such a rage with him?"

"He is a heretic and a traitor," returned the priest, "and despiseth the Queen's proceedings. Wherefore I command you, in the Queen's name, have him to the stocks, and see he be forthcoming."

But the Constable is grieved for his servant, and will give no such promise. He shall be forthcoming, but shall not be subject to the indignity of the stocks. As Constable, Rolfe has the power to bail him out, and this he does, although Newall vehemently insists again, "Have him to the stocks."

Between the arrest and the interrogation at the priest's house but a short time elapsed. Rolfe would fain have saved the young man if he could, and warned him to be very careful how he should answer the questions put to him. To all which advice he replied, "Sir, I am sorry that it is my hap to be a trouble to you. As for myself, I am not sorry; but I do commit myself into God's hands, and I trust He will give me mouth and wisdom to answer according to right."

Still the Constable continued to urge caution, and especially because of the old grudge which Newall had against himself, for which reason, he said, "he will handle you the more cruelly, because of displeasure against me."

But John Alcock was not to be moved. It is very evident that he coveted the crown of martyrdom, and would never be induced to protect himself by evading the truth.

"I fear not," he said, "he shall do no more to me than God will give him leave; and happy shall I be if God will call me to die for His Truth's sake."

It was the question of the Sacrament which was first brought up when, that afternoon, true to his word, Rolfe conducted the

shearer to the priest's house. When asked as to his belief concerning it, he boldly answered, "Ye make a shameful idol of it." In this case, as in the case of so many other peasant martyrs of the time, the simple mind had grasped the higher mystical significance of the Holy Ordinance, and passionately held to it, rejecting with indignant scorn the grosser material interpretation. And so his fate was sealed, and the very next day he was taken up to London by Newall and thrown into Newgate to await his trial.

There is to me a terrible significance in that short sentence which occurs over and over again in the histories of martyrs of humble degree, who, "with evil keeping and sickness of the house, died in prison."

This was the fate of both John Alcock, the shearer, and John Dale, the weaver, of Hadleigh. It was so easy to get rid of troublesome peasantry in this way, without all the sensational details of a public burning, and it had withal the advantage of securing a drawn-out suffering more terrible than the short-lived agony of the stake. As these lowly martyrs gasped out their breath in those noxious dungeons, there was no crowd of sympathising on-lookers to cheer them in the last dread struggle.

Around them the darkness as of a tomb had already closed in, and the terrible walls shut them away from all tender human contact.

Alone, tortured with irons that pressed into their frail flesh, sick with the loathsome conditions of the place, these brave souls still held unflinchingly to the Truth, and, notwithstanding repeated examinations, could not be shaken in their adherence to it.

Did they pass away from life alone, unnoticed and unwept? We will follow them in spirit even now, and, descending the long stone stairway, will feel with them the chill of the death-damp vault, and spend with them the last sad hour. Ah, brothers, you shall not die alone, if spirits unhampered by time may visit the scenes of your anguish, and whisper in your dying ears

words of sweet consolation. Be of good cheer, dear brothers; your deaths have not been in vain. You who dared all for the truth are keeping the truth alive even to-day. By your strength we are still strengthened; by your living sacrifice we are learning to die.

As we stand within the grey walls of the ancient church of Hadleigh, visions of the past rise and pass before us, and voices long hushed sound again through the echoing aisles. Here Monks had chanted and Reformers thundered. Here the blessed Bilney poured out his soul to an astonished congregation, when, on a visit to Hadleigh, he was the means of converting the town to Protestantism. Although within the church many alterations have been made since that time, the same walls that we see to-day were then standing, and even the later perpendicular windows had already been introduced.

We can hardly look unmoved at the font, which, although it has been re-cut, is probably the identical font behind which John Alcock stood on that eventful Sunday.

Up to as late a date as 1825, "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," in which is to be found the story above related, might still have been seen chained to a desk in the chapel, which is divided by a screen from the north aisle, where it was probably placed not so very long after the events took place. A Genevan Bible, dated 1576, is still in the church chest, and it is conjectured that this was also similarly attached.

In the field just outside Hadleigh stands the Monument which marks the place of Rowland Taylor's suffering. Visitors to the sacred spot will be glad to find the name of Richard Yeoman, the Curate, also inscribed on the more recently erected stone, but we still miss other names, humble, perhaps, but surely not less honourable, and among them are those of John Alcock, who died in Newgate, and John Dale, who succumbed to the "evil keeping" in Bury Gaol.

Would it not be a fitting tribute to the memory of the martyred minister of Hadleigh, if, beside his name, those of some of his faithful flock were also inscribed?



A MARTYR OF BERGHOLT



A Martyr of Bergholt.

WHILE Dr. Argentine was painting the posts of the town with "Vivat regina Maria," to testify to his joy at the accession of Queen Mary, on many another heart in Ipswich and the neighbourhood the news fell as a veritable death knell.

The stormy vicissitudes through which the Church had passed during the reign of King Henry seemed at length to have tossed her into the quiet haven where she would be, and a transient peace had been enjoyed while young Edward held the sceptre. But too soon, alas, it slipped from his frail grasp, and the passing bell that told of his soul's escape was the signal for the storm to burst afresh, and the waves to lift themselves up even higher than before.

In one house, at least, in Bergholt, fearful apprehension was the predominating feeling. Here, as at Hadleigh, a faithful minister dwelt in the midst of his flock, feeding them in green pastures, and leading them beside the still waters. During the quiet days of King Edward, when the priests were allowed to marry, Robert Samuel and his wife had dwelt together in peace at Bergholt, but suddenly all was changed. The merciless fiat had gone forth strictly enjoining all married priests to put away their wives and return to a life of celibacy, and those who would not comply with the new regulation were hunted from their benefices, and in many cases even forfeited their lives.

Of course, the question of the marriage of the priests was intimately connected with other vital points of doctrinal difference,

but it was often made the pretext for a first attack on the Protestant clergy.

As already noticed there lived at this time, not far from Ipswich, a Justice of the Peace of the name of Foster, who had been mainly instrumental in compassing the destruction of Dr. Taylor, of Hadleigh, and now with equal zeal, he sought how he might bring the ministry of Robert Samuel to a close.

The first step was to remove him from the benefice of Bergholt, but, although this was accomplished, the faithful pastor continued diligently to teach and exhort the people as opportunity offered. Visiting secretly at the houses of those who remained faithful to the reformed doctrines of the Church, his influence was still felt, and his poor flock was encouraged to hold on its way.

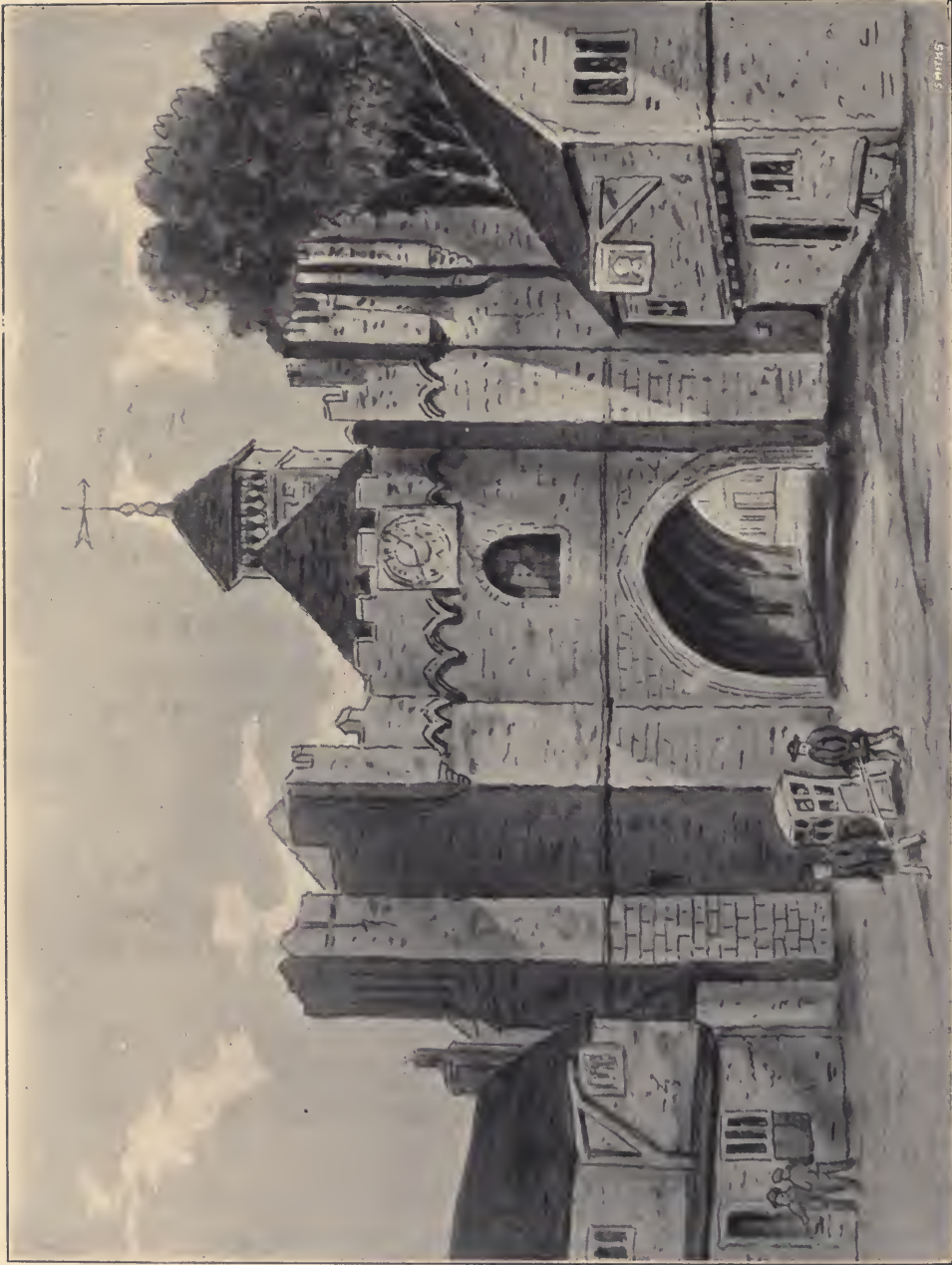
But, of course, this could not be allowed to continue, so spies were sent abroad to catch him, and, as his wife was living in Ipswich, it was determined to way-lay the minister when he came to visit her.

Such a proceeding, however, was likely to be attended with some uproar if done in broad daylight; so waiting till night had closed in, a large band of persons surrounded the house, and Robert Samuel was seized and dragged away from his weeping wife to be hurried off to prison. . . . As the last sentence is written, one is struck with the emptiness of mere words unaccompanied by the feeling which should give them soul.

How lightly we state the facts; with what callous hearts we recount these tragic histories.

But how to break through this habit of indifference, that is the question, how to see again through the mist of years the human faces of these, our brothers and sisters, our fellow citizens, of whose memories we may well be proud.

There is a plot of ground in Westgate Street, between Black Horse Lane and the Feathers Inn, over which cart-wheels rumble and busy feet are perpetually passing.



From a copy by Hamlet Watling.

“THIS BUILDING HAD BEEN CONVERTED INTO THE ‘TOWNE GAOL,’ AND HERE IT WAS THAT HE SPENT THE FIRST NIGHT OF HIS IMPRISONMENT.”

To the casual observer pausing for a moment to contemplate the scene, the idea of commercial prosperity is the thought naturally uppermost, and no vision of the past builds an invisible monument over the sacred spot. But happily, there are seers still amongst us, and looking through their inspired eyes, the sordid work-a-day present melts away for a moment, and in its place faintly, but still preceptibly, the strange old world arises.

Thanks to the graphic pen of Mr. Glyde, whose beautiful work on "Old Ipswich" is so well known, we can conjure up a picture of this exact locality, as it presented itself to the eyes of Robert Samuel in 1555. Instead of the busy thoroughfare, with smooth wood-paving and tram lines, a rough cobbled road appears, spanned by a picturesque gateway, known as the West Gate. The massive stone masonry speaks unmistakably of 14th century work, with additions made at later periods, and the deep bastion-like towers and battlemented west front give the building an imposing appearance.

Moreover, it not merely serves as the West Gate of the town, but contains in it certain chambers which have served various purposes, according to the exigencies of the time. When Robert Samuel was apprehended this building had been converted into the "Towne Gaol," and here it was that he spent the first night of his imprisonment.

It is strange to stand on the very spot where the gate then stood, and to try and realise the scene when, at midnight, the prisoner was brought through the streets, surrounded by a strong guard. John Bird must have been the keeper of the gaol at this time, for we hear of him in this capacity as early as 1546, and less than a year after Samuel's imprisonment this good jailer was accused by Queen Mary's Commissioners of encouraging the Protestants who were brought there from time to time.

Notwithstanding loss of liberty, we may gather, I think, that the time spent in Ipswich Gaol was not altogether an unhappy one for the Minister of Bergholt. He at once found himself

in the company of other men of like mind, awaiting their trials, and "passed his time meekly among his godly brethren, so long as he was permitted to continue there."

Perhaps, from this place, he penned those two beautiful letters addressed "To the Christian Congregation," wherein he exhorts his fellow-sufferers to "be constant in obeying God, rather than men. For, although they slay our sinful bodies for God's verity, yet they cannot do it but by God's sufferance and goodwill, to His praise and honour, and to our eternal joy and felicity. For our blood shed for the Gospel shall preach it with more fruit, and greater furtherance, than did our mouths, lives and writings, as did the blood of Abel, Stephen, with many others more."

Happy would it have been for Robert Samuel if he might have remained in Ipswich Gaol up to the day of his trial and martyrdom; but this was not allowed. Even the poor comfort to be derived from the friendly keeper and the sympathy of his fellow-prisoners was too good for the heretic minister, so he is taken off to Norwich to be dealt with by Dr. Hopton, the Bishop, who had already succeeded so well in reclaiming wanderers, and restoring them to the fold of the Roman Church.

Of the means used for their conversion there is plenty of evidence still existing. When dungeons, irons and fire are resorted to as methods of persuasion, we can only wonder at the superhuman courage given to so many of these suffering ones, who held out even to the dividing asunder of soul and body. In some cases, indeed, their minds gave way before the stress of agony, but even that worst of all terrors, the loss of reason, could not wring from them the desired recantation.

For this holy and reverend man of God special tortures were in waiting, and it was hoped that he would give way before them. But God stood by him, and the angels ministered to him, and there was ever the form of Another that brightened the gloom of the terrible dungeon of Norwich Castle.

There was ingenuity in the methods of torment adopted, such

ingenuity, that it sets one considering curiously the condition of the mind that could have invented them, and to wonder whether a confused sense of religious duty could really partially excuse acts of such atrocious cruelty. "Chained bolt upright to a great post, in such sort, that standing only on tip-toe he was fain to stay up the whole poise or weight of his body thereby," Robert Samuel endured night and day the extremist anguish to which the human body could be subjected.

But as though this were not enough, to it was added the pain of slow starvation. He must be fed indeed, else the soul would escape too soon from its frail tenement, but the "two or three mouthfuls of bread" allowed him in the day, and "three spoonfuls of water" would only serve to increase rather than to relieve the misery of the pining body. When we read that special manifestations were granted to him in the prison, we are not inclined to be sceptical as to the fact, for without such Divine succour the final endurance of this man is hardly to be explained.

Possibly, the enforced fast rendered him specially susceptible to spiritual impressions, but be that as it may "after he had been famished or pined with hunger two or three days together, he fell into a sleep as it were one-half in a slumber, at which time one clad all in white seemed to stand before him, who ministered comfort to him by these words, "Samuel, Samuel! be of good cheer, and take a good heart unto thee, for after this day shalt thou never be either hungry or thirsty.?" "Which thing," we read "came to pass accordingly," for he felt neither hunger nor thirst again till he was led away to be burned.

Nor was this the only consolation that he received during this time of grievous need.

"Many more like matters concerning the great comfort he had of Christ, in his afflictions, he could utter," he said, "besides this, but that shamefacedness and modesty would not suffer him to utter it."

One dream however, he told to his friends before his death,

the fulfilment of which they recognized afterwards. He seemed to see three separate ladders set up to heaven, one of them longer than the others, but all at length joining together, and becoming one. Did this, indeed foreshadow the deaths of the two Ipswich women who had succoured him, and who were apprehended the very next day after Samuel's death, and died on the Cornhill about seven months later?

It was on the thirty-first day of August, A.D. 1555, that the sufferings of the minister of Bergholt at length came to an end. So terrible, indeed, had they been that his burning was "but a trifle in comparison of those pains that he had passed." His death took place in Ipswich, presumably on the Cornhill, though I have discovered no account of the exact spot where it occurred.

It seemed to those who stood round watching the end, that his body, as it burned, shone "bright and white as new-tried silver."

Among the writings left by him, a quotation of his "Confession of Faith" may not be out of place in these days. Many and varied as were the shades of difference in the general opinions of these early Protestants, they were one in an emphatic denial of the materialistic explanation of the Holy Communion. That its higher mystical significance was not sufficient to satisfy their opponents the rejection of such a confession as the following plainly shows. Speaking of his belief with regard to the most Holy Supper of the Lord, he says, "As soon as I hear these most comfortable and heavenly words spoken and pronounced by the mouth of the minister, 'This is My Body, which is given for you,' when I hear (I say) this heavenly harmony of God's infallible promises and truth, I look not upon, neither do I behold bread and wine; for I take and believe the words simply and plainly, even as Christ spake them. For hearing these words, my senses be rapt and utterly excluded, for faith wholly taketh place, and not flesh, nor the carnal imaginations of our gross fleshly and unreverent eating, after the manner of our bodily

food, which profiteth nothing at all, as Christ witnesseth, but with a sorrowful and wounded conscience, and hungry and thirsty soul, and pure and faithful mind, do fully embrace, behold and feed and look upon, that most glorious body of Christ in Heaven at the right hand of God the Father, very God and very Man, which was crucified and was slain, and His blood shed for our sins, there now making intercession, offering and giving His holy body for me, for my body, for my ransom, for my full price and satisfaction, who is my Christ, and all that ever he hath; and by this spiritual and faithful eating of this lively and heavenly bread I feel the most sweet sap and taste of the fruits, benefits and unspeakable joys of Christ's death and passion, fully digested into my soul.

“For my mind is quieted from all worldly adversities, turmoilings, and troubles, my conscience is pacified from sin, death, hell and damnation; my soul is full, and hath even enough, and will no more; for all things are but loss, vile dung and dross, vain vanity, for the excellent knowledge-sake of Christ Jesu, my Lord and Saviour. Thus now is Christ's flesh my very meat indeed, and His blood my very drink indeed, and I am become flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones. Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Yea, I dwell in Him, and He in me, for, through faith in Christ and for Christ's sake, we are one—that is, of one consent, mind and fellowship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Thus am I assured and fully persuaded, and on this rock have I builded, by God's grace, my dwelling and resting-place, for body and soul, life and death. And thus I commit my cause, under Christ, the righteous and just Judge, who will another day judge these debates and controversies, whom I humbly beseech to cast His tender and merciful eyes upon the afflicted and ruinous churches, and shortly to reduce them into a godly and perpetual concord.”

Shall we not echo the martyr's prayer, and add a fervent Amen?



THE MARTYRDOM OF
AGNES POTTEN & JOAN TRUNCHFIELD.



The Martyrdom of Agnes Potten & Joan Crunchfield.

IF Queen Mary's accession was a cause of rejoicing to her Roman Catholic subjects, her death removed the sentences which hung over the heads of no less than seventy-seven persons in Ipswich and the neighbourhood. Besides these, others had fled the town, and again others had their names added to a list of those who refused to observe Romish ceremonies.

But Mary had still two more years in which to exercise her baneful power, when two poor women, one a brewer's wife and one the wife of a shoemaker of Ipswich, were burned on the Cornhill.

The story of their martyrdom is invested with a peculiar interest, inasmuch as it is connected, as already mentioned, with that of Robert Samuel, who suffered about six months previously.

The very day after his death the women were apprehended on account of their having rendered him some assistance.

This fact called to the mind of the witnesses of their execution a strange and beautiful dream which the martyred minister had related during his awful sufferings in Norwich Gaol.

He seemed to see in his sleep "three ladders set up toward Heaven, of the which there was one somewhat longer than the rest, but at length they became one, joining (as it were) all three together."

Very steep was the ladder up which these tender women climbed, and more than once their hearts failed them, and it seemed that human nature could scarcely endure the strain put upon it.

They had been urged by a friend, Rose Nottingham, to convey themselves from the town while yet there was time, but one of them had answered—

“I know well that it is lawful enough to fly away; which remedy you may use if you list. But my case standeth otherwise. I am tied to a husband, and have besides a sort of young children at home . . . therefore I am minded, for the love of Christ and His truth, to stand to the extremity of the matter.”

We are not told which of the two made this answer, but Agnes Potten was at times “cast into marvellous great agonies and troubles of mind” during their imprisonment.

Perhaps it was the thought of her ungodly husband and the “sort of young children” from whom she had been torn, that was a too poignant misery.

Be this as it may, she nevertheless remained “ardent and zealous” in the cause which she had chosen, and was even the stronger of the two, while for six long months they faced the prospect of death.

At length, on February 19th, 1556, the awful morning dawned, and on the Cornhill of Ipswich, a great multitude gathered to see the burning of these two heroic women.

It was Michael Trunchfield’s wife whose timid soul was suddenly exalted as she gazed upon the stake, and knew that death was inevitable.

The peace that had hitherto been denied to her now descended with healing balm on her wounded spirit, and it is said of her “that she much exceeded the other in joy and comfort” at this terrible moment.

While they prepared themselves for the stake, they used the opportunity afforded, for urging upon the bystanders “to lay



*The Burning of Agnes Potten & Joan Trunchfield
at Ipswich.* 24^s



From Fitch Collection, by kind permission of the Suffolk Archaeological Council.

“THEY HELD UP THEIR HANDS IN THE FLAMES WHILE THEY CALLED UPON GOD
FOR HELP IN THE HOUR OF EXTREMITY.”

hold on the Word of God, and not upon man's devices and inventions."

The "comfortable words of scripture" afforded them strength, and they held up their hands in the flames while they called upon God for help in the hour of extremity.

And so the end came, and once again the ashes of martyrs mingled with the dust of the road-way, and the young children waited and wept for their mothers, but God "put their tears into His bottle"; for "are not these things noted in Thy Book?"



A ST. MARGARET'S HERO.



A St. Margaret's Hero.

WHATEVER may be our belief regarding the general claims of psychologists, the fact remains that presentiments of death are of very common occurrence. So well authenticated indeed are cases of the kind as to be quite beyond dispute, and even unbelievers in occult manifestations are forced to make an exception in favour of these phenomena.

A remarkable instance of such a premonition occurred in Ipswich in the year 1556.

William Pikes, a tanner, who was then living in the town, had been in the habit of befriending the victims of Queen Mary's relentless cruelty. Being naturally of a hospitable disposition, he gladly bestowed of his goods to feed the poor, and many a hunted refugee found shelter and comfort within his walls. Among the most treasured of his possessions was a "Thomas Matthewe's Bible," which he was in the habit of studying with deep and earnest attention.

How he came by it we do not know, for it was a forbidden Book, and could only be retained at the risk of life and liberty. Printed on the fly-leaf in red letters were the following words, "Set forth with the King's most gracious licence," and in it was to be found a "special table collected of the common places in the Bible, and the Scriptures for the approbation of the same; and chiefly about the Supper of the Lord, and marriage of the priests, and the Mass, which there was said not to be found in the Scripture."

The history of this Bible may be worth while recalling to mind. It was printed at Hamburg about A.D. 1537, and was Tyndale's translation, but as he was apprehended before it was

actually ready for the press, it was thought well to father it with a fictitious name, and it was known as "Thomas Mattheue's Bible."

The circulation of this translation in England gave great offence to the clergy and bishops, though Archbishop Cranmer "liked very well of it," and not long afterwards orders were given for its suppression.

Grafton, the printer, who three years later produced another Bible called "the Great Bible," was sent to the Fleet, and before he came out "was bound, in three hundred pounds, that he should neither sell, nor imprint, nor cause to be imprinted, any more Bibles, until the King and Clergy should agree upon a translation." This, the latter carefully refrained from accomplishing during the rest of the reign of Henry VIII., and "thus the Bible from that time stayed."

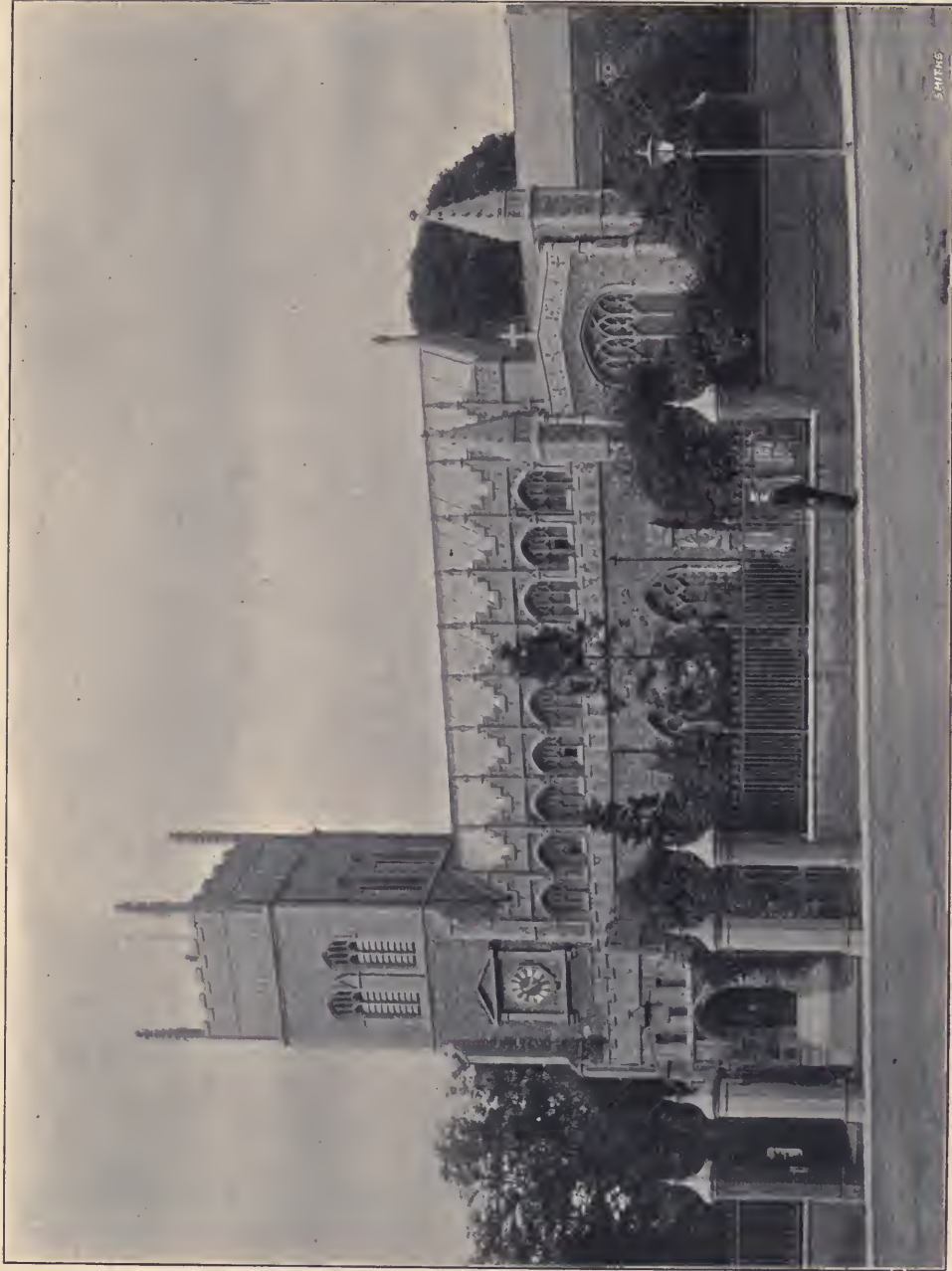
It was just nineteen years after the suppression of these Bibles that we find William Pikes, of Ipswich, in possession of a volume.

Queen Mary had been reigning for three years, during which time he had absented himself from public worship, in which he could no longer join with a clear conscience. For this reason he was already a marked man, for careful records were kept of all such as neglected to attend the churches.

Turning to a document drawn up on May 18th, 1556, entitled "A complaint against such as favoured the Gospell in Ipswich, exhibited to Queene Marie's Counsaile," in a list of such persons belonging to St. Margaret's, we find the name of "William Pickesse, tanner." The church register, which dates from 1539, probably contains records of his family history, but the difficulty of deciphering it has prevented me from clearing up this point.*

That it was no lack of the true spirit of devotion that caused the tanner to dissociate himself from his fellow-worshippers in

*After writing the above, with the kind help of Mr. Redstone, Secretary of the Suffolk Archæological Institute, I have searched the St. Margaret's register and there found the christening and deaths of the children of "Wyl Pyckes," dating from 1541 to 1558.



From a recent photograph by John White.

“IT WAS NO LACK OF THE TRUE SPIRIT OF DEVOTION THAT CAUSED THE TANNER TO DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM HIS FELLOW-WORSHIPPERS IN ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH.”



St. Margaret's Church, we may gather from the fact of his diligent study of the Bible at home and his habit of meeting with others for prayer and meditation when possible.

It was during one of those quiet hours when only "He that seeth in secret" knew what was passing in His servant's mind, that the presentiment of death came upon him, and this is how it happened.

He was sitting in his garden, looking towards the south, with the Bible open upon his knee, when "suddenly fell down upon his book, between eleven and twelve o'clock of the day, four drops of fresh blood, and he knew not from whence it came. Then he, seeing the same, was sore astonished, and could by no means learn from whence it should fall; and wiping out one of the drops with his finger, he called his wife and said, 'In the virtue of God, wife, what meaneth this? Will the Lord have four sacrifices? I see well enough the Lord will have blood. His will be done, and give me grace to abide the trial! Wife, let us pray,' " said he, "'for I fear the day draweth nigh.' "

This strange coincidence occurred a little after Midsummer, but nothing daunted, only a few days later, William Pikes went up to London and took part with some forty men and women, who had met together for prayer and study of God's Holy Word.

It was in a back close, "in the field by the town of Islington," that this assembly met, and the spot had been chosen for the sake of secrecy, it being apparently so walled round as to prevent their being readily discovered.

Like the little company at Gethsemane, who found in the Garden a quiet shelter for rest and prayer, these humble followers of the Disciples were watching with their Master. But the traitor was at hand. Looking over the wall was a certain man who watched their proceedings, and presently saluted them, saying that "they looked like men that meant no hurt."

One of the company thereupon supposing that he might be the owner of the close, asked permission to remain there, to

which he gave ready assent, repeating the traitor words, "Ye seem unto me such persons as intend no harm."

As soon as the stranger had disappeared the meeting was resumed. Bibles, as precious as they were difficult to obtain, were brought out and reverently read, and with surprise and joy the good news of a salvation "without money and without price" was revealed to the listeners.

It is not difficult to picture the scene. Earnest faces bent over the sacred pages, while ever and anon, as some hitherto hidden truth came to light, hearts would swell with holy joy, and eyes light up with a new hope.

Ah! unsuspecting little flock of "good poor lambs," make the very most of the brief time remaining to you. Store up what courage you can against the day of trouble that is coming. You who pray, pray earnestly, and let your cry come into the ears of the Lord of Sabbaoth, for already, like a wolf greedy of the prey, the enemy steals upon you.

Here is the Constable of Islington, with one other, who is suddenly in your midst looking and viewing, and peremptorily ordering that the books be delivered up. And after him, as in Gethsemane of old, come six or seven others with bow and bill, and weapons of warfare.

So the meeting breaks up in disorder, as the terrified women fly for their lives, some escaping from the close, and some as they are led away to the brew-house. But many of the men are content to be taken in companies divided off among the soldiers, and twenty-seven of them are brought to Sir Roger Cholmley's, where their names are demanded. Of these, twenty-two willingly give them, and they are straightway conducted to Newgate.

How it fared with these good men afterwards, it pities me to tell. They were so brave and true a company of innocent souls, and the storm fell upon them while their lips were charged with prayer, and their hearts with holy thinking, so there was

found no Peter to raise the sword to Malchus, but meekly, and as becometh godly men, they went with their captors, though "it was not hard for them to escape that would."

I seem to see their set faces on that solemn deathward journey, and to hear in the tread of their feet an echo of the tramp of another crowd passing along to Calvary; and I am very proud to think that among that goodly band was William Pikes, of St. Margaret's parish, Ipswich.

But after this came the fierce temptation to save their lives by the sacrifice of conscience.

At first they should all be delivered from Newgate if they would hear a mass, and afterwards fourteen articles are ministered to them by Bonner, to all of which they must make satisfactory answers, or else inevitably perish. Out of the twenty-two, thirteen remain constant, "counting not their lives dear unto themselves, so that they may win Christ."

So the faggots were lighted at Smithfield, and Roger Holland, one of the first seven sufferers, embracing the stake and the reeds, made this prayer: Lord, I most humbly thank Thy Majesty that Thou hast called me from the state of death, unto the Light of Thy Heavenly Word, and now unto the fellowship of Thy saints that I may sing and say, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts!' And Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit. Lord bless these Thy people, and save them from idolatry." And so, praying and praising God, with eyes raised to Heaven, he ended his life.

Then, on the 14th day of July, 1558, William Pikes, with five others, suffered in like manner at Brentford, animated by the same courage, and strong in the same faith. His timid prayer for "grace to abide the trial," was more than answered, so that he even "joyfully" approached the stake, where cruel death awaited him.

We linger over the history of this noble Ipswich citizen, and are fain to find the spot where the godly tanner lived, and to recognize the garden in which he sat "looking towards the south,"

There is no monument erected to his memory, but his name, with many another, shall be graven on our hearts, and his example be a stimulus to our zeal for the truth.

A PLOUGHMAN'S DAUGHTER.



A Ploughman's Daughter.

IN the days when higher education was not so much as dreamed of for the peasantry of England, country folk were fain to rely mainly upon Dame Nature for their schooling, and very well indeed she sometimes taught them.

To begin with, no sluggard would ever get promotion in her school, but the scholars must be up betimes of a morning to begin their daily labour ere yet the sun was high in the heavens. And the tasks she set them were no play work either, but honest downright toil, that taxed the muscles and weathered the skin, but made brawny arms and healthy hearts.

In such a school Alice Driver, of Grundisburgh, had been brought up, and as she drove her father's plough in the fragrant fields, and felt the stress of the long march through the heavy upturned soil, her character was forming and strengthening, and, all unknown to herself, she was being prepared to pass through an ordeal, before which many another heart had given way.

Of further particulars of her early life, and the subsequent courtship and marriage with a swarthy son of the soil, we know but the barest facts, but we like to dream for a minute of walks through the waving cornfields, and happy trysts under a mellow harvest moon. For Alice was only thirty, when life, with all its tragic admixture of poetry and pain, of glamour and grief, was to be snatched from her.

We do not know how it fell out that this young country-woman came under the notice and displeasure of Noone, one of the Suffolk justices, but it is probable that her name had been sent up by the priest of Grundisburgh. Doubtless she had begun to absent herself from church, for her conscience would not

allow her longer to join in a service, the central motive of which appeared to her idolatrous.

We ask rather curiously what had led her to this conclusion, and we find the answer in the simple fact, that having become possessed of a Bible which she studied with much pains, she had learnt to see how the practice of the Church had departed from the teaching given at the divine institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

Only to-day I have been standing in the ancient church of Grundisburgh where Alice and her husband had been wont to worship. I have looked at the beautiful screens with their rich mediaeval colouring, and thought how familiar their eyes must have been with every detail of the carved panels, as Sunday by Sunday the two sat facing them.

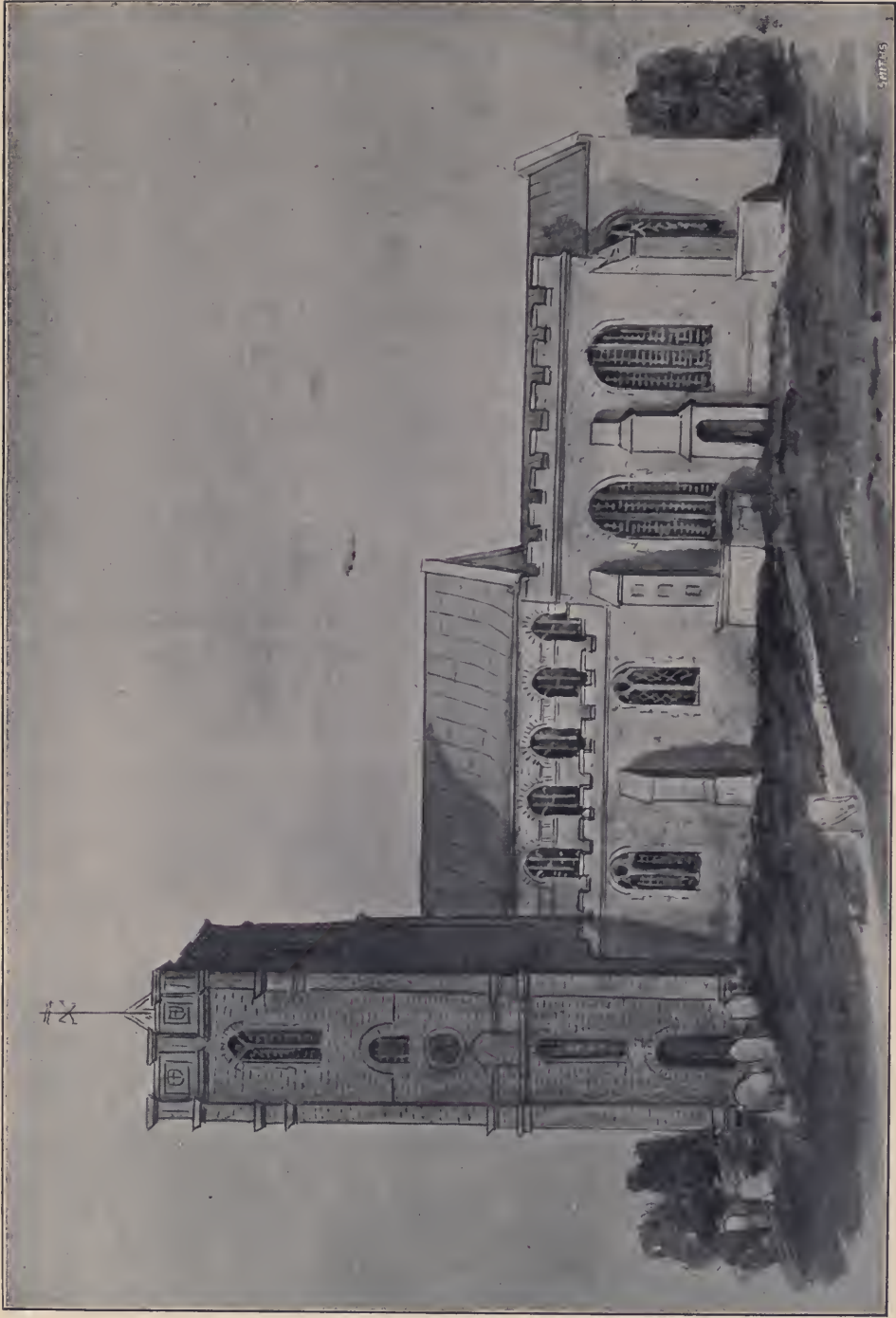
Overhead on the lofty wooden roof the angels still spread their wings as then, and one almost seems to hear the rustle of the feathers so skillfully, were they wrought by some hand long since dead. But at the time of which we are writing even the beauty of the architecture had ceased to have any attraction for Driver's honest wife, for her soul was vexed within her at the things she saw and heard within the sacred building.

Now at the risk of her life she was harbouring one Alexander Gooch, of Woodbridge, a weaver who for his refusal to admit that the Pope was supreme head of the Church, as also to receive the mass, was obliged to fly from his home and remain in hiding.

But the Justice had succeeded in tracking him out, and to-day the village of Grundisburgh was thrown into a state of unwonted excitement, by the arrival of Noone himself, with a body of men in search of the fugitive.

Alice Driver, too, knew that her time had come, so together they left the house and made for the fields, hoping to elude their pursuers.

There was not much time in which to decide upon the best hiding-place, but an "hay-golph" seemed to afford a likely



From a sketch by Hamlet Watling.
"THE ANCIENT CHURCH OF GRUNDISBURGH WHERE ALICE AND HER HUSBAND HAD BEEN WONT TO WORSHIP."



place of concealment. Into this they stepped, and drawing the hay over them awaited the approach of their enemies.

Presently voices were heard in the field eagerly discussing their possible whereabouts, and breathless with apprehension the two lay as quietly as the beating of their poor hearts would admit. But these were ungentle days when rough and ready methods were resorted to. No matter though one of the fugitives is a woman, a pitchfork would do the work of searching most thoroughly, so the hay is ruthlessly stabbed, and the iron point finds the tender victims.

And now it is good-bye to the village home at Grundisburgh, for Alice Driver has made her choice. Those pleasant uplands where the corn waves, and the blue bean fields pour out their fragrance into the evening air will know the ploughman's daughter no more, for she is going on a long journey, a journey from which there will be no returning.

We try to follow in thought the sad procession as the two captives are taken from Grundisburgh. Did the village people peep fearfully from behind their lattices, afraid to show any sympathy with the sufferers, but indignant at the cruelties being practised in the name of religion?

There are many questions that we should like to ask, but we cannot catch the answers through the long distance of years. Where was Alice Driver's husband when the poor woman was captured? We hear nothing of him, either at this time or afterwards, and it is probable that he either did not share his wife's convictions or had not the courage to face the consequences of a confession of them.

In the ancient church register at Grundisburgh, which, with the kind help of the Vicar, I searched for Driver's name, the following entry, among the burial records, seems to tell its own tale:—

“ 1565. Edward Driver buried 13 (?) January.

A. O. pd.

We cannot positively say that this man was Alice Driver's husband, but, as the date of his decease was only seven years after her martyrdom, we may reasonably suppose this to have been the case. The family of Driver still continues to exist in Grundisburgh, and the name will be found scattered at intervals throughout the church records.

But to return to the two captives, who had taken their farewell of the village, and started on the ride to Melton. Here they were imprisoned in the gaol, where they remained for a time, and were afterwards carried to Bury, to attend the Assize of St. James's-tide.

It must be acknowledged that Agnes Driver showed more spirit and wit than meekness during her trial, both at Bury, and afterwards at Ipswich. A woman of extraordinary courage, she faced her judges and answered their accusations unmindful of consequences. In days when a word uttered against the Sovereign was promptly met with punishment, she dared to liken Queen Mary, the persecutor, to Jezebel, for which offence Sir Clement Higham immediately ordered that her ears should be cut off. To this she joyfully assented, and thus mutilated, but unsubdued, she was carried back to Melton Gaol.

We need not attempt to defend every detail in the behaviour of this poor woman. Throughout her trial, and to the very end, a strong personality made itself evident. She could smile as she afterwards entered the judgment hall at Ipswich to be examined by Dr. Spenser, Chancellor of Norwich, so that he greeted her with the words, "Why, woman, dost thou laugh us to scorn?" To which she made quick reply, "Whether I do or no, I might well enough, to see what fools ye be."

It was useless to try and entrap her into making a confession that should be afterwards used against her, and when the Chancellor asked her why she had been laid in prison she did not help him by the ready answer, "Wherefore? I think I need not tell you, for ye know it better than I." To which Spenser, somewhat taken aback, replied, "No, by my troth woman, I know not why."

"Then have ye done much wrong," quoth she, "thus to imprison me, and know no cause why; for I know no evil that I have done, I thank God, and I hope there is no man that can accuse me of any notorious fact that I have done justly."

Finding it difficult to be even with this clever country-woman, the Chancellor plunged at once into the religious controversy and demanded: "What sayest thou to the Blessed Sacrament of the altar? Dost thou believe that it is very flesh and blood after the words be spoken of consecration?"

Then followed a long silence. All the multitude gazing at the ploughman's daughter saw her stand with resolute countenance and lips sealed.

This was too much for "a great chuff-headed priest who stood by." Probably thinking that either she could find no answer, or if hurried into speech, would commit herself at once, he urged her to answer the Chancellor. But it would have been well for him if he had not interfered, for, looking at him austerely, she administered this rebuke: "Why, priest, I came not to talk with thee, but I came to talk with thy master, but if thou wilt I shall talk with thee, command thy master to hold his peace."

Perhaps this unexpected rejoinder provoked the by-standers to mirth. At any rate the chronicler tells us, that "with that the priest put his nose in his cap and spake never a word again."

But it was not for lack of words that Alice Driver held her peace. She only wished to emphasize her astonishment that such a question could be asked, and when the Chancellor again pressed her for a reply, she calmly said, "Sir, pardon me though I make no answer, for I cannot tell what you mean thereby, for in all my life I never heard nor read of any such Sacrament in all the Scripture."

"Why, what Scriptures have you read?" asked Spenser.

"I have (I thank God) read God's Book," replied the woman.

To which the Chancellor quickly responded. "Why, what manner of book is that you call God's Book?"

“It is the Old and New Testament. What call you it?” questioned Alice in her turn.

Spenser being obliged to admit that this indeed was God’s Word, she then continued to interrogate her judge, and to such purpose that the words of this simple woman may with profit be recorded.

“That same book have I read throughout,” she said, “but yet never could find any such Sacrament there; and for that cause I cannot make answer to that thing I know not. Notwithstanding for all, I will grant you a Sacrament, called the Lord’s Supper, and therefore seeing I have granted you a Sacrament, I pray you show me what a Sacrament is.”

“It is a sign,” replied Spenser, whereupon Dr. Gascoigne, who was standing by, “confirmed the same, that it was a sign of a holy thing.”

“You have said the truth, sir,” said she, “it is a sign indeed, and I must needs grant it; and therefore seeing it is a sign, it cannot be the thing signified also. Thus far we agree, for I have granted you your own saying.”

It is impossible in this short account to give further particulars of the trial, but we may well regard with astonishment the wisdom displayed by this unlettered daughter of the people. For herself, she rightly attributed the readiness of her replies to the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, and we cannot do better than to give her own words uttered just before the sentence of condemnation was passed upon her.

There had been a short pause in the proceedings, for one by one her adversaries had been put to shame by the ready wit that met every question directed against her, and now she spoke for the last time.

“Have you any more to say? God be honoured. You be not able to resist the Spirit of God in me, a poor woman. I am an honest poor man’s daughter, never brought up in the University, as you have been, but I have driven the plough before my

father many a time (I thank God); yet, notwithstanding, in the defence of God's truth, and in the cause of my Master Christ, by His grace I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same, and if I had a thousand lives, they should go for payment thereof."

On the 4th of November, 1558, at seven o'clock in the morning, Alexander Gooch, of Woodbridge, and Alice Driver, of Grundisburgh, were taken to the Cornhill, Ipswich, where the stake was set up for their burning.

Amongst the multitudes that thronged the place even at that early hour, were many whose sympathies were with the victims, and demonstrations of affection and pity helped to encourage them in their last hour of agony. Kneeling upon a broom faggot, they offered their simple prayers to God, and sang Psalms together till one of the bailiffs, Richard Smart by name, roughly bade them "have done."

In vain they appealed for further time in which to prepare for the solemn hour. Doubtless fearing the effects of such scenes upon the multitude, Sir Henry Dowell, the Sheriff, thereupon commanded that they should be tied to the stake. As the heavy iron chain was fastened about Alice Driver's neck, once more the heroic spirit of the woman made itself evident, and her last recorded words are eminently characteristic:—"Oh!" she said, "Here is a goodly neckerchief; blessed be God for it."

At this divers came, and shook them by the hands, much to the annoyance of the Sheriff, who ordered that they should be arrested, whereupon so many others hastily ran to the stake that the Sheriff was obliged to leave them all alone.

Then a light was set to the twigs, and the cruel heat of the kindling fire began to make itself felt. First it devoured the broom, and then the faggots, and finally seemed unwillingly to play about the unwonted fuel that it was presently to consume.

But even flesh and blood could not long resist the persistent leap of those red tongues of flame, that licked and scorched the tender flesh, and blackened the faces of the young martyrs.

At last it was over, and the crowd moved away, and the Cornhill resumed its ordinary aspect. Busy feet trod again the sacred ground consecrated by the ashes of the dead. Busy minds forgot too soon the lessons of that tragic scene, and as we pass to-day over the spot, there is no memorial stone to remind us that here a young weaver from Woodbridge, and a ploughman's daughter from Grundisburgh, set us a noble example of that faithfulness unto death, which has surely been rewarded with "a crown of life."

WATCH WARD AND THE STORY OF THE
"OLD COFFEE HOUSE."

Watch Ward

AND

The Story of the "Old Coffee House."

ALTHOUGH the theory of transmigration of souls from one organic body to another has died out with the growth of education, it is certainly still a theory that can be proved as regards inorganic bodies of brick and mortar.

The same walls that have echoed to the voices of citizens long since sleeping in our quiet churchyards, have received ever fresh relays of occupants, varying as much in habit of life as in natural temperament.

Perhaps, few houses in Ipswich have undergone greater vicissitudes than the old house at the corner of Tower Street, now known as the Central Hall premises. From the domestic to the commercial, from the grave to the gay, and again from the educational to the social, almost every change has been rung on the chimes of its life-history.

Here, first of all, a wealthy burgher displayed his taste in the grand old gabled front, which formerly faced Tavern Street, but was so ruthlessly cut away to widen the thoroughfare. In Mr. Glyde's "Illustrations of Old Ipswich" we learn much that is interesting about one of the early owners of this house, and we can even see the name of the good man and his wife carved along the ornamental cornice of the old building in a picture which is dated 1815.



By kind permission of John Glyde.

"A WEALTHY BURGHER DISPLAYED HIS TASTE IN THE GRAND OLD GABLED FRONT
WHICH FORMERLY FACED TAVERN STREET."



Henry and Dorcas Buckingham saw no occasion to be ashamed of their name when they placed it in such a prominent position, and what little we know of the character of this rich burgher shows him to have been a worthy and useful member of the community. Moreover, although his beautiful house was actually in the parish of St. Lawrence, he attended the Church of St. Mary-at-the-Tower, and in 1608 became a churchwarden of an eminently industrious and generous type.

It is pleasant to read of the spiritual activity that distinguished the services at St. Mary's Church. Sunday after Sunday crowds of earnest worshippers were to be seen thronging from all parts of the town to the sacred edifice; so many, indeed, that at length the accommodation was not sufficient for them. And the magic that drew such a multitude was the fervent eloquence of the preacher, Samuel Ward, who could not be hampered by the limits of written sermons, but whose soul-stirring words flowed in extempore power from lips touched by live coals from off the altar.

As to the chief burden of his discourses we can gather, perhaps, from the affectionately-familiar name "Watch Ward," by which he was known.

When we consider the times in which this man lived, and the stormy conflicts through which the Church was still passing, we can get some vague idea of the condition of the mind of his listeners, for when Henry Buckingham became warden of the Church, Queen Elizabeth had been dead but five years, and the "wisest fool in Christendom" was at the head of affairs in England.

Only three years before the time of which we speak, Gunpowder Plot had startled the Protestant world into a renewed sense of insecurity, and created a fresh outburst of Puritan zeal. The bulk of the nobles, and almost all the wealthy traders, were now of this persuasion.

It was plainly to be seen in their manners, their dress, and

their general behaviour. Even their very conversation was tinged with the prevailing religiousness, and Scripture allusions fell from their lips in the ordinary language of every day. So far Puritanism was at its best. The Bible was never so eagerly studied or its precepts more carefully followed. But, alas! persecution was soon to harden the Puritan character. From a conscientious zealot, he would presently become an unsparing censor, too narrow and rigid of belief to be able fairly to see from any point of view but his own.

Nevertheless, at the time of which we speak personal and practical religion was at high water mark in the Protestant Church, and it is impossible not to admire the striking vitality that characterised much of the preaching of the period.

King James might amuse himself by drawing up a "Book of Sports," in which he authorised and encouraged his people to indulge in all sorts of amusements, such as dancing and archery after Divine service on Sundays, but "Watch Ward" continued his pious exhortations in St. Mary's Church; and presently, when an organised persecution of the Puritans, resulting finally in the emigration of the Pilgrim Fathers, made it difficult and even dangerous to be true to conscience, such men as the Ipswich minister were not to be daunted, but continued their steadfast labours.

At last the congregation grew so prodigiously that it was necessary to build a gallery on the North side of the Church for the greater accommodation of the worshippers. It was Henry Buckingham and his brother churchwarden, Mr. George Raymond, who came to the rescue and erected a gallery at their own cost, repaying the outlay by receiving the seat rents themselves. It is sad to know that this zealous work was brought to an end by an order from the Star Chamber, then in the zenith of its power. Archbishop Laud had no sooner come into the See of Canterbury than he proceeded vigorously to attack the Puritan

ministers, and under this persecution Mr. Ward was punished and suspended.

* * * * *

With such gleanings from history we are able again, as it were, to re-soul the old house in Tower Street, and it is a pleasure to think that the earliest occupant of whom we have any record, was a God-fearing man, and an earnest church-worker. But this is only the first stage in the history of the building.

By 1689 it had lost its private character, and had become a "Coffee House." Now a new soul enters the place, and it is the resort of the quieter public who, in the words of Mr. Glyde, "sipped their favourite beverage, and at times refreshed themselves with a nap over the dull journals of the day."

It formed a pleasant "lounging place for gossip," and here the news of the town was circulated and discussed by men whose heads were clear enough to form wise judgments. At this time the Corporation was very strict indeed in its care of the public morals, and "so jealously was the liquor trade watched, that no tradesman selling wine or liquors was eligible for the office of Bailiff." This being the case, the old Coffee House had a fair chance of succeeding, and it was still used for the same purpose when 78 years afterwards it was offered for sale, being then known as "Dod's Coffee House."

But some time before it changed hands the character of the house had undergone considerable alteration. Anyone passing down Tower Lane of an evening might occasionally have heard the rhythmic beat of hundreds of flying feet, chasing away the hours to the measure of gay music, for George IV. was but eight years old, when a large assembly room was added to the attractions of the Coffee House.

This quaint hall, with its highly-decorated walls and interesting ceiling, is well worth a visit of inspection. Here the wealth and beauty of Ipswich disported themselves at the big county balls, and later on the royal feet of George, Prince of Wales,

pressed the boards, but hardly, perhaps, added any intrinsic value to them. For the "first gentleman in Europe," for all his fine clothes, was not a model to be copied with too great exactness.

Later on the house was known as Alderson's Coffee House, and again as Prigg's Coffee House, and finally the Assembly-room became the Reading-room of the Working Men's College, an institution which did a noble work in Ipswich for upwards of 30 years. As to the date of the original structure it has been assigned to the middle of the 16th century.

We cannot draw this slight sketch to an end without some allusion to the splendid carved corner-post which once existed, and was the great glory of the house. Among the numerous half-sized figures carved upon it, "Faith, Hope and Charity" were represented by three female figures, bearing in their arms respectively a cross, an anchor, and a young child, while considerably above them, and balancing these milder attributes, the sturdy representations of "Fortitude, Vigilance and Courage" suggested a happy union of masculine and feminine virtues.

So much for the past history of the premises now known as the Excelsior Working Men's Club. Once more a new soul has entered into the ancient habitation, but it is to be hoped that the spirit of that early occupier, Henry Buckingham, may still hover over the old domain, and inspire the manhood of Ipswich with his own robust qualities of "Fortitude, Vigilance and Courage."

The following are a few quotations from a sermon entitled: "Woe to Drunkards," by Mr. Samuel Ward, preached in St. Mary-le-Tower Church. They are taken from a collection printed in 1636, which was formerly in the possession of Mr. William Brown of Ipswich.

"Now, then I appeale from your selves in drinke, to your selves in your sober fits. Reason a little the case, and tell me calmly, would you for your owne, or any man's pleasure, to

gratifie friend or companion, if you knew there had beene a toad in the winepot (as twice I have knowne happened to the death of drinkers) or did you thinke that some Caesar Borgia, or Brasutus had tempered the cup; or did you see but a Spider in the glasse, would you, or durst you carouse it off? And are you so simple to feare the poyson that can kill the body, and not that which killeth the soule and body ever, yea for ever and ever, and if it were possible for more than for ever for evermore? O thou vaine fellow, what tellest thou mee of friendship, or good fellowship, wilt thou account him thy friend or good fellow, that drawes thee into his company, that hee may poyson thee? and never thinkes he hath given thee right entertainment, or shewed thee kindnesse enough, till he hath killed thy soule with his kindnesse and with beere made thy body a carkasse fit for the Biere, a laughing and loathing-stocke, not to Boyes and Girles alone, but to men and Angels. Why rather sayest thou not to such, What have I to do with you, ye Sons of Belial, yee poysonfull generation of Vipers, that hunt for the precious life of a man?"

"Who sees and knowes not, that some one needlesse Ale-house in a countrey towne, undoes all the rest of the houses in it, eating up the thrift and fruit of their labours; the ill manner of sundry places, being there to meet in some one night of the weeke, and spend what they have gathered and spared all the dayes of the same before, to the prejustice of their poore wives and children at home; and upon the Lord's day (after Evening Prayers) there to quench and drowne all the good lessons they have heard that day at Church. If this goe on, what shall become of us in time? If woe be to single drunkards, is no Nationall woe to bee feared and expected of a Nation overrun with drunkenesse?"

On the fly-leaf of the book, ornamented by illustrations of two beacon lights is the following verse:—

“Watch, Ward and keepe thy Garments tight,
For I come Thief-like at Midnight.
All-seeing, never slumbering Lord ;
Be thou my Watch, Ile be thy Ward.”

From the Suffolk Garland we learn that this good minister was buried “in the chancel of the Church of St. Mary-le-Tower, in which, on a flat stone was the following inscription to his memory :*

“Watch Ward
Yet a little
While for He that shall
come will come.”

*This stone was removed during the restoration of the Church.

APPENDIX A.

I have not attempted in this short account of some of our local martyrs to enumerate all those who suffered for the faith, enduring persecution or death, in this county.

There still remain many whose names are more or less familiar, and whose histories have yet to be written. Among them are the following:—

JOHN FORTUNE, a blacksmith of Hintlesham.

“He either died in prison or was made away with privately, for after the term of persecution ceased he was nowhere to be found.”

ROGER BERNARD, a labourer of Framsdén.

“Burned at Bury.”

ADAM FOSTER of Mendlesham.

“Burned at Bury.”

W. SEAMAN, husbandman, Mendlesham.

“Burned in the Lollard’s pit at Norwich.”

W. SEAMAN’S MOTHER.

“Compelled to hide all day in the fields. She died of cold and want.”

ROBERT LAWSON, weaver, of Stow.

“Burned at Bury.”

J. NOYES of Laxfield.

“Burned at Laxfield.”

MOTHER BENET of Wetheringset.

“Obliged to hide in the fields. Died of cold and want.”

J. CORKE.

“Burned at Bury.”

R. MILES.

“Burned at Bury.”

A. LANE.

“Burned at Bury.”

J. ASHLEY.

“Burned at Bury.”

JOHN TUDSON of Ipswich.

“Burned at London.”

A. SHEARMAN.

“Burned at Yoxford.”

THOMAS COB, butcher, of Haverhill.

“Burned at Thetford.”

WILLIAM ALLEN, labourer, of Walsingham.

“Burned at Walsingham.”

ROGER COO, an aged man and full of faith.

“Burned at Yoxford.”

THOMAS SPICER of Winston.

“Burned at Beccles.”

J. DENNY.

“Burned at Beccles.”

E. POOLE.

“Burned at Beccles.”

Mrs. ALICE TWAITES, gentlewoman of three score years.

“Persecuted and driven from Winston.”

TWO of Mrs. TWAITES’ SERVANTS.

“Persecuted and driven from Winston.”

The following were all driven from Winston. Some imprisoned, some beggared, and others burned.

H. SMITH and his WIFE.

W. CATCHPOLE and his WIFE.

J. MAULING and his WIFE.

WM. BUCKINGHAM (or Burlingham?) and his WIFE.

One BRIGHT (or ROUGHT?) and his WIFE.

The following were all of Mendlesham. Some were imprisoned, others beggared and compelled to be vagabonds, and others burned.

SIMON HARLESTON, his WIFE, and FIVE CHILDREN.

W. WHITING and his WIFE.

T. DOBSON and his WIFE.

T. HUBBARD and his WIFE.

J. DONCON, WIFE, and MAID.

W. DONCON.

T. WOODWARD, the elder.

One KENNELD'S WIFE.

A POOR WIDOW.

Mother SEMON'S MAID.

THOS. PARRET.

"Burned at Bury."

MARTIN HUNT.

"Burned at Bury."

J. NORICE.

"Burned at Bury."

JAMES ABBES of Stoke-by-Nayland.

"Died at the Stake."

The following nine persons were all examined at Bury and affirmed that there was no bodily presence in the Sacrament. Presumably martyred.

EDMUND POLE of Needham.

JOHN DENNYE of Soham.

MARGARET CHESTER of Thwaite.

TWO MEN from Bedfield.

JOHN COOKE of Stoke-by-Nayland,
Sawyer.

ALEX. HANE of Stoke-by-Nayland.

JACOB ASHBEE.

ROBERT MYLES.

EDMUND FOSTER of Mendlesham.

"Condemned."

ROBERT SAMPSON of Mendlesham.

"Condemned."

THOS. SPURDMORE of Crowfield.

"Condemned."

ELIZABETH SAMPSON of Bedfield.

"Condemned."

ANN BOLTON of Ipswiche.

"Condemned to be burnt."

JOHN TRUNCHFIELDE of St. Leonard,
Ipswiche.

"Condemned to be burnt."

MICH. TRUNCHFIELDE of St. Leonard,
Ipswiche.

"Condemned to be burnt."

ROGER COMES of Long Melford.

"Condemned to be burnt."

WILLIAM ALLEN, labourer, of Somerton.

"Condemned to be burnt."

These three were burned only a fortnight before Queen Mary's death.

P. HUMPHREY.

"Burned at Bury."

J. DAVID.

"Burned at Bury."

H. DAVID.

"Burned at Bury."

WM. BROWNE, Parson of Little Stonham.
"Imprisoned, &c."

N. PEKE of Ipswiche.

"Burned at Ipswich."

This List is mainly taken from Hollingsworth's "History of Stowmarket." The Historian extracted many of them from volumes of original papers belonging to Foxe, now in the British Museum.

APPENDIX B.

Among the large collection of Foxe's original papers in the British Museum I find the following letters in his own handwriting:

"Draught of a letter from John Foxe in behalf of two learned and godly strangers."

"Draught of a letter from John Foxe, to the Archbishop of York (as it seems), in behalf of Henkey."

"Draught of a letter of Mr. John Foxe to some friends, in behalf of a poor man wronged by Stephen Bechyng."

"Part of a letter from Mr. John Foxe, to Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk (to whom he had formerly been tutor), dissuading him from marrying with the Queen of Scots."

"Draught of a letter from Mr. John Foxe, to a noble person, exhorting him to forgive his wife, who now sincerely repented of her offence, which was commonly reputed unpardonable."

"Original letter of Mr. John Foxe, to a gentlewoman, recommending a very godly gentleman, a friend of his, for a husband to her, though others made her greater offers."

"Draught of a letter to Queen Elizabeth," &c., &c.

Of letters received by Foxe many of the originals are among this collection, I cull from them the following, which speak for themselves as to his wide sympathies.

"Original letter of Tho. Dollman to Mr. Fox, desiring his assistance, being under temptations and inclined to despair."

"Original letter of T. H. to Mr. Fox, desiring comfort as byinge wonderfully appawlede to se no frewt to follow the herynge God's worde thys 20 yers, but that rather he waxsythe the worse and worse."

"Original letter of Will Punt to Mr. Fox, concerning the verification of a story in the Martyrology, the truth of which was called in question."

"Part of a letter from one under temptation to blasphemie and requesting his counsel thereupon."

Among the papers is also to be seen "A sermon made (at Hadleye in Suffolke) the 10 Feb., A.D., 1555, beyng the next day after that Doctor Taylor suffered; made by the next and new Parson (against Doctor Taylor his predecessor)."

APPENDIX C.

In the picture of the Tower of Hadleigh Deanery the windows of two chambers will be seen above the doorway, the lower of these two rooms was Doctor Taylor's library, and here he was sitting when he heard the church bells rung.

A brass to the Martyr's memory, engraved in black letters, is framed on the wall of the N. transept of Hadleigh Church. It bears the date 1555, but is supposed to have been placed in the Church early in Elizabeth's reign.

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